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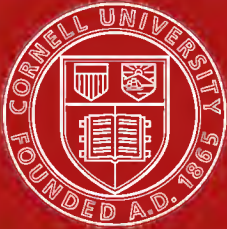
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The gentle Shakspeare: a vindication.



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• THE

GENTLE SHAKSPERE:

A VINDICATION.

BY

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FORMERLY OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE.
F.R.H.S., ETC.

"Catholicism gave us Shakspeare."—THOMAS CARLYLE.



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PREFACE.

I HAVE written this book with but very little preparation, and with only a previous very general knowledge of the works of Shakspeare.

I had been for some time collecting material for the pedigree of the Griffin family for my "History of Derbyshire" when, accidentally, I found that Alys Griffin—one of the family of Braybrook, in Northamptonshire—living *tempe* Henry VIII.—had married a Shakspeare.

I did not at first think much of it, for I had some time previously found that a William Shakspeare (in 1558) had prised the goods under the will of Edmund Griffin of Long Ichington, in Warwickshire, but knowing little of him, and supposing that he was a member of the family of Griffin of Wichnore whose connection with Braybrook was then unknown, I still took no notice of it for I had already met with several Shaksperes in

various places—among them poor William Shakspeare, who was drowned in the Avon in the time of Queen Elizabeth—and the several entries relating to John Shakspeare and Robert Arden in the Court Rolls of the Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Warwick. It was not until, in the beginning of last month, I met with Mr. Bickly's magnificent edition of the Register of the Guild of Knowle, in which I found most valuable information relative to the Griffin family, which enabled me to complete that pedigree, that I found an Alys Shakspeare. And very curiously with one exception this is the only record in which I have, as yet, discovered one of her name.

To Mr. Bickly's book, therefore, the world is most deeply indebted for this most remarkable and purely accidental discovery, a discovery which, it is perhaps not too much to say of it, utterly confounds the traducers of our great poet, and helps the proof of his relation to other people and places very different from those so cheerfully assigned to him by his modern admirers in the cesspools and amongst the bogs of Warwickshire.

This is another, from very many testimonials, of the great value to the historian of the honest patient labour of those who spend their time and money in preparing careful editions of the works of antiquity.

Mr. Bickly's edition is magnificently attired—that is, printed and mounted—but it has two faults, which give the searcher much trouble and which may, perhaps, be amended: the want of a full index, and a little over editing. It is much better to print an ancient MS. exactly as it is, or rather in the very order of its pages, and without additions or extensions.

Many of the too clever editors extend the contracted words—to their own satisfaction but to the bewilderment of their readers, many of the letters being similar—and if the liberty to extend is given, it is not difficult to arrive at several, and in some cases many readings. Mr. Bickly has not erred in this, but in correcting the order of the entries ; so that although he has given the pages of the original in each of his own, yet by inverting the order, to give his book a correct chronological arrangement, he has made it impossible for the scholar, at least without great labour, to compare the original with it or to judge by the context of the date of any particular passage ; and his index is defective in giving neither dates, nor Christian names, nor the number of times each name appears in the same page—this last a very serious fault. Perhaps the book might be re-bound in the proper order of its pages, and certainly a new index should be given; so that this valuable register should be made fully accessible. But in spite of these minor defects, Mr. Bickly is to be congratulated upon his success, and the great aid his work will be to the Warwickshire historian. Unfortunately, Dugdale's truly magnificent work, the history of this county, is not readily accessible ; besides, Dugdale does not come near enough to our own day, and he has neglected to use those very valuable sources of information, the Subsidy Rolls and the Fines relating to the sale of lands, with many other rolls which are now accessible, and without a fair abstract of which no county history can be perfect, since it omits an account of the subdivision of lands so necessary to the genealogist.

Having found Alys Shakspeare through Mr. Bickly's book, I looked into some of the most popular of the great writers,

Halliwell, Hunter, Malone, French, and others, who have written upon Shakspeare, and, with the exception of the last, I met with nothing but disappointment. In some of them, indeed, very valuable records appear ; but generally these works are badly written, without arrangement, childish and erroneous in their reflections, if not utterly repellant. I don't refer to French's work, which has none of these faults, but it is chiefly valuable for the Arden family history. In all the others there is little and very partial original research. The most important records have not been looked at ; and these great writers have chiefly contented themselves with self-laudation and abuse of each other, though they have, naturally, copied from each other, without acknowledgment, nearly all the facts that have yet been published. I venture to suggest that there is yet ample scope for serious labour, in order to properly illustrate the history of the Shakspeare family. In the course of a single month's work I have only been able to skim the more important records, but with the results, which these papers shew, of exhibiting how little has hitherto been known, notwithstanding the labours of the numerous and able men who have been employed to search for information. How they have missed these rolls, especially those of the all-important Court of Wroxall, is more than I can understand, unless it is that they have been misdirected in making their search, and took it, too readily, for granted that proper searches had been made. My experience, after many years of genealogical and historical work, is that no one is to be trusted implicitly, because searchers work with special and different objects in view ; and if I wish to be specially accurate, I don't trust my own work, if it has been done for another object. It is impossible to collect

all the little fragments which occur, and one of them omitted may prevent the proof wanted from being attained.

This book has taken me just three weeks to write. In it I have somewhat boldly attempted to correct the errors of others, with an unsparing hand, but only with a view to the elucidation of the truth. If others will take the trouble to take the rod in hand, and correct mine, I shall not repine. I am not ashamed to confess that reading Mr. Donnelly's book I accepted much of its conclusions ; although by testing his "cryptogram" I soon found it be nonsense, and now, through this investigation, I have discovered the absurd blunders upon which his arguments are based, I entirely reject his teaching, and can only wonder that I could have been misled by it. It is with great satisfaction that I bring these facts to light, and assist in some measure to sweep away the rubbish that has been heaped upon the grave of William Shakspeare, not by Donnelly only, but by many who have rashly ventured to write about him.

I was much struck with the following observations, which I found in Joseph Hunter's MSS. in the British Museum, although it is not quite clear who wrote them. These words are weighty, and well worth preservation, and I write this book with a full sense of the censure they may possibly contain upon my own efforts :—

Somebody, possibly a Dr. Symmons, wrote in 1785 :—"It does not appear to me that the Commentators are at all aware of the importance of the office they had undertaken. Shakspeare is a great national treasure, he sustains the dignity of England, and gives it a superiority in the literary world, he has

given stability and form to our language, and has perhaps rendered it immortal, and transferred to America may render it universal, and with these advantages are connected wealth, power, and honour. It is fitting, however, great as he is, that he should be commented and criticised, and then he will be the more purified and manifested, and of the greater use ; yet there ought to be some proportion preserved between the critic, and the poet, and the mere labourers of the press, floating on the credit of black, or Roman, or Greek letters, and debarred by public disapprobation from shedding their impurities in his superior name."

"It is, I presume, no injury to these gentlemen to say they are but as vermin, to whom the whole frame and proportion of him, they feed on, is unknown ; and yet Dr. Johnson, in particular, who seems the least able to comprehend him, assumes often (strange to say) the tone of an equal, nay sometimes of a superior man, but though I would not prohibit even Mr. Hurdman or Mr. Davies from now and then wallowing in an idle note, yet I think the public should demand due reverence from all, and I perceive that those who are most competent in their different ways, as Dr. W. and Dr. Farmer, are most impressed with reverence and care. For myself I take the liberty, which I allow to all, but which I hope in no instance to abuse ; and should be very glad, I must confess, if the name of Shakspeare and Dr. Johnson could be placed far as the poles asunder."—Hunter MSS., vol. vii. p. 500.

In the same spirit Coleridge wrote, at a much later date, in one of his lectures. He asserts :—

“ It is humiliating to reflect that, as it were, because heaven has given us the greatest poet, it has inflicted upon that poet the most incompetent critics. None of them seem to understand his language, much less the principles upon which he wrote and the peculiarities which distinguish him from all rivals.

“ The state in which his text has come down to us is evidently very imperfect ; in many places his sense has been perverted, in others if not entirely obscured so blunderingly represented as to afford us only a glimpse of what he meant. Modern inquiry and speculative ingenuity has done nothing to retrieve the genuine language of the poet. His critics have neither understood or appreciated him.” And these words apply with redoubled force at the present day.

We thank Mr. Dyce for this fine bit of word painting :—
“ Shakspeare is not only immeasurably superior to the dramatists of his time in creative power, in insight into the human heart, and in profound thought ; but he is, moreover, utterly unlike them in almost every respect—unlike them in his method of developing character, in his diction, in his versification.”

This book was written before I saw the work of Charles Knight, which, happily, is free from the faults so common to the others, and I have been able only to slip in between my lines, here and there, a few of his. He writes in an admirable spirit, although he, too, in some instances has given way too much to the prejudiced views of others.

I have great pleasure in acknowledging the ready help I have received from Mr. Richard Savage, the librarian of

Shakespeare's Birthplace, who generously laid open to me all the stores of knowledge which, through years of patient industry, he has acquired, not, as this shewed, for himself, but for the benefit of all. Mr. Savage is a true antiquary, keen-sighted, patient, and labourious, and very ready and able to grasp a valuable fact when it comes before him. In his own book, "Shakspearean Extracts from Edward Pudsey's Book," he has at page 81-3 given extracts from the Augmentation Book, vol. 404, as well as from the Court Rolls of Snytterfield, which indicate the bent of his mind towards the course I have taken in ascertaining the history of the family. Hunter was of the same opinion; but, with this light before him, Hunter, unfortunately like so many others, never followed it out. I am very greatly indebted to of Mr. Richard Savage for giving me full access to his collection of MSS., including his notes of a very large number of registers of parishes in the County of Warwick, a great and unusual act of kindness. I have to thank many correspondents who wrote congratulating me on my success, some of whom promised to enlighten me further from their own stores, which, from their letters, I judge to be richer than and superior to my own. But up to date these contributions have not come to hand. Perhaps I write and print more rapidly than suits their leisure.

I have to acknowledge with gratitude the generous and valuable help of George Marshall, Esq., Rouge Croix, through whose kind aid I was able to search for myself properly some of the invaluable records of his College.

I have also to acknowledge the aid I have received from Miss Ethel Stokes in transcribing various records for the Griffin

pedigree, some of which, especially the Inquisitions *post mortem*, were in a very bad condition, the crabbed Latin being almost indecipherable and requiring great skill and knowledge of the language to give an accurate and satisfactory idea of the contents.

Also for friendly help from J. A. C. Vincent, of 61, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and W. F. Noble, of 88, Rosendale Road, West Dulwich, genealogists.

LIGHTWOODS COTTAGE,

BEECH LANES, BIRMINGHAM.

THE GENTLE SHAKSPERE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"A sort of naughty persons lewdly bent."—

Henry VII., 2nd pt., Act ii., sc. 1.

ONE of the objects of this book is to place before the reader a true account of a great poet—the greatest, perhaps, that the world ever saw—and, if possible, to relieve his memory from the mass of misrepresentation, calumny, and even unreasoning adulation which has been piled upon it.

As most certainly no one man ever brought together so many beautiful and noble ideas, or expressed them so worthily, or so naturally, no one has ever yet excited so much comment and inquiry, or has caused such a multitude of books to be written about himself and his works, it might be thought that it is superfluous and unnecessary to add another to the pile, that the limit of the great library which has been created to his honour has been reached ; and that the wise gentlemen who

have assumed to themselves the power of controlling thought and of defining theories respecting William Shakspeare—in other words of settling controversies and stifling honest discussion—should be respected in their office, and troubled no more with “vague possibilities and wild conjectures”; but in truth the true limit of discussion has not been closed, nay it has hardly been reached, for the simple reason that as yet, despite the multitude of accounts we possess, there are none based upon truth; the premises upon which they are built have been wrongly assumed. We know almost as little of the true man as if he had been a myth. Indeed, some of the shrieking schools declare, that as an author he had no existence, that there was such a man as Will Shakspeare is not absolutely denied; but that he ever wrote a line of the magnificent lyrics called his, or of the marvellous plays which have been published under his name, they utterly deny. There was, indeed, it may be conceded, a common, indeed, a very common and improper person, called William Shakspeare, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, a low drinking, pot-house fellow, he may have been an actor (but if so only a poor one), he was an intelligent rustic who lived in pot-houses and usually slept under hedges after his carousals, and they point with satisfaction, and in proof, to a certain crab-apple tree (in Warwickshire) still called after his name, and, sad to say, loved by the common people because it is said that the drunken lout once slept under it.

This common creature, they report, was a butcher by trade, and being, it is said, very fond of small theatricals, as butchers sometimes are, would spout orations of a kind whenever he killed a calf; being also a wicked poacher, often, we hope, and probably, it is believed, put in the stocks. After a disreputable marriage, which not liking, or the frequent sitting in the stocks, it is not quite clear which, he deserted his wife. She was nearly double his age when the bad boy married her, and he ran away to London, where (as Mr. Halliwell Phillips writes) being “an active and intelligent rustic,” he gained a precarious living by holding horses, and so forth. He was no

actor, though it is thought that he was once allowed to play the ghost in *Hamlet*, but somehow—of course by disreputable means—like the proverbial tradesman who swept out the shop, married his master's daughter, and ended by securing the business for himself—though he could not marry the daughter—this drunken cad got hold of the management of the theatre, and made money by it. And after his death—which, by the way, was caused by a drunken carousal—some ignorant people published the plays which had been acted in his theatre, and which had been written by the great Lord Bacon, by the Earl of Derby, by the Earl of Southampton, by the Earl of Pembroke, or by one or other of them, or by somebody else, it doesn't matter by whom, as the works of this William Shakspeare. This is a fair summary of the views of one school. As I poor Yorick.

Another school—especially prominent in America—scarcely less objectionable than that of the embodiment of vulgar abuse just summarised, would give his works a transcendent meaning; his writings they call "hermetic." E. A. Hitchcock, a great chief of this school, writes of his sonnets "as a performance of art" they are "far beyond the ordinary judgments of man," for most people they must remain "like mountain tops, as Mount Sinai, Horeb, and Calvary—as most inaccessible, where nevertheless the atmosphere is always serene, like a beatified soul in the presence of God." "The question," he writes, "has been asked, 'to whom were they addressed?' but no one seems to reflect that they cannot be explained, or understood, from any merely literal point of view." At page sixty-six of his book Hitchcock writes, "in the fifty-second sonnet the poet feels that he is in possession of a certain key, which opens to him a sweet uplocked treasure. This is the secret key of the spirit, the very secret of the Lord, which, though disclosed or revealed in the Scriptures, is only disclosed, or made known, under certain conditions." Prodigious—we had almost profanely written, bosh; once get this idea into foolish people's heads and they will listen to any silly explanation that an

audacious quack may choose to palm upon them. Once people begin to regard Mahomet as God's prophet, they eagerly swallow any nostrum he chooses to offer to them.

The hermetic school is pernicious and wicked—it is mere quackery, liable to gross abuse. That of the Honourable Ignatius Donnelly is harmless, compared to it. No one possessed of ordinary common sense can listen to Donnelly's theory for a moment, for he has given so much of his "great cryptogram" to the public that anyone who chooses can prove its absurdity for himself. It matters not that Mr. Donnelly pretends or thinks that he hides in his own breast the key which uplocks his secret. It is no longer a secret, because the data he has given shews that several readings, in different senses, can be taken from the same set of words, when they are placed apart. If, as is the fact, one set of words in one place produces a different meaning from that which the same set of words gives when used in another, the whole idea of a cryptogram vanishes. A system of cypher which is so loose that a variety of meanings can be extracted from it, at will, is no cypher, and is of no use to anyone; for the person who receives it could learn nothing positive or certain from it, and this is the fatal blot of poor Donnelly's "cryptogram." It is hard, perhaps, to write of him that he is an impostor, and probably untrue, and no doubt should be cast upon his honour; but he can only escape this condemnation on the plea of insanity, and his great work, so far as his discovery is concerned, may safely be regarded as harmless. He has, however, collected much curious learning regarding Shakspeare which, possibly, is of some value; and this, despite his monomania, should, if possible, be utilised, although it is so intermixed with gross exaggeration, vain assumptions, and ludicrous blundering that the greatest care and discrimination must be employed in using it.

Perhaps more objectionable than the shrieking school, because more misleading, are the orthodox writings of the sages—the self-constituted "authorities on Shakspeare"—of whom

Halliwell-Phillips is a mighty chieftain. They write with authority ; they have in their breasts all that can possibly be known concerning the man. No one can, or shall, go a step further in the search of truth concerning him. But alas, reading these great authorities does not bring either conviction or peace to the mind. Hunter, far the best of this school, as his MSS. now in the British Museum shew, when he published his book had not gone very deeply in the way of original research. He had done little more than read and unsparingly condemn the writings of the others as shallow, unreasoning, and even insincere, especially Malone, for whom he had an utter contempt, and for Halliwell-Phillips, of whom his opinion was something worse. His MSS., as well as his book, prove that there was no finality about his work, very little original work, and that every point he treats upon was open to revision and alteration, even by himself. And reading Halliwell-Phillips one is struck at once with the shallow and partial nature of his labours. Certainly he has collected valuable facts from certain places, and did he but know how to arrange and utilise them he might have proved something. He no doubt employed able men to search for him, and they did their work well, doubtless, as they were directed ; but they were mis-directed, and did not search in the right places. They have missed the most important facts, because they did not look for them. They searched the rolls very near the spot where something might be found, but not far enough, and of course they found nothing. They omitted to search the rolls for the adjoining parishes of of Wroxall and Baddesley Clinton, where, as this book will prove, they might have found much. They blundered shamefully even where they did look, as, for instance, in the Probate Office in Worcester—the very first place to be examined. They actually failed to find the administration bond for Richard Shakspeare, of Snitterfield (Shakspeare's grandfather), which proves that John, his father, was son of Richard. Someone made a present of this fact to Mr. Halliwell-Phillips, but he failed to see its value, though of course he printed one of his

small tracts about it, which, however, he did not publish. Had Halliwell honestly used this fact he must have re-written the greater part of his work, for it is based upon assumptions contrary to it, and to avoid doing this seems to have been his object in so dishonestly strangling it. Even Joseph Hunter, careful antiquary that he was, who had these wills abstracted, omitted to examine the administrations. The author, in publishing, on the 14th October last, a short statement in the *Times*, was assailed by several persons, by letter and verbally, with the question : " Where do you find proof of that fact ? Halliwell does not give it in his very last edition, nor do any of the commentators mention it." Very likely not. If they did not look in the proper place, how should they know it ? But as a fact, Halliwell was secretly possessed of it, but suppressed it for his own reasons.

But it is not in important matters of fact and of proof that Halliwell's work is defective only, it is in his comments upon the facts which he possessed that he is most objectionable. He applies his knowledge of the state of society in those days, which is perverse and shallow to other times, and knowing nothing about Shakspeare's describes the habits of the time of his own grandmother ; nothing can be more untrue and objectionable, for instance, than his account of the household and surroundings of Mary Arden, the poet's mother ; it is flat, dull, and unprofitable, as vulgar and common place, and probably as untrue as that of the shrieking school of vulgarians who would make the poet to be a low sot. Indeed, coming from one who ought to know better, it is if anything more disgusting. He takes the inventory of the will of Robert Arden (Mary's father), and being unacquainted with the meaning of these documents and their usual contents, argues from what he does not find there that they (the Ardens) were something very different from what they were. Robert Arden, he tells us, was a large farmer (he was, in fact, as will be presently shown, a gentleman of very ancient lineage, of the highest connections, and of considerable property). " The family lived after the manner of

pigs rather than like human beings—they possessed no table knives, no forks, no crockery—the food was manipulated” (what can he mean) “on flat pieces of stout wood” (too worthless, he adds, to be put into the inventory), “they had no towels, and did not possess a single wash-hand basin amongst them, they neither washed their hands nor combed their hair.” The unclean people. No wonder that the youthful William, if his mother never washed or combed him, became the dirty low person he is represented to have been—it was merely a question of heredity and daily custom. Yet this is a fair summary of Mr. Halliwell’s great work. Is it worth reading? Is it worthy of finality? Defective in facts, it is simply ridiculous, a very caricature when it pretends to be a complete description.

Nor are the stories respecting Shakspeare’s father, John, more worthy of credit. About the time of his marriage it is said that he settled in Henley Street, in Stratford-on-Avon, and he probably remained there to the day of his death, in a substantial and comfortable mansion fit for any gentleman’s family, not at that date merely, but one not to be despised in our own. The unfortunate Queen (Henrietta Maria) resided in it for three weeks, at the time of the Great Rebellion, though possibly this may have been the house called the “New Place.” From his earliest days to his death John Shakspeare possessed lands assessed by the Heralds (nearly at the close of his life) at the sum of £500, quite a large estate at that date. He early filled the Municipal offices in the town, rising to the very highest, and then, probably for certain reasons, he chose to live a retired life. Yet because there was a shoemaker of the same name (quite a common one in Warwickshire, and possibly there were several of the name in Stratford), and little uncertain facts creep out in the musty records, bearing upon the poverty and shortcomings of one or another of them, these are all assigned by unskilful antiquaries to the retired gentleman, and sagacious observations—after the manner of Halliwell-Phillips—are made concerning them. The only answer to these captious critics is that they do not prove their case. Once grant the fact that two or more

men of the same name existed contemporaneously, and this cannot be denied, and you cannot attribute these facts to either positively, but can only appropriate them to the most likely, and that amounts only to a mere guess after all.

Hunter discovered a John Shakespeare living at Clifford Chambers, in 1579, and there was certainly a shoemaker at Stratford-on-Avon of the name. There are, doubtless, some perplexing facts with regard to the alleged poverty of the poet's father, but they are all explainable when it is taken in account that he was a Papist, and he is fined (in 1592) as a recusant for not coming to church, as were several other persons, like himself, secret Catholics. His name stood third in a list of nine, who, it was added in a note, "come not to church for fear of process for debt." This was a very common pretence, and as the Town Clerk and many other leading officials of Stratford-on-Avon were also secret Catholics, it is very possible that a pious fraud was carried on. That some friendly creditor not only had a small judgment against him but pretended to wish to arrest him, and to give this colour his friends on the Corporation may have pretended that he was poor and excused him his quota of taxation. But we know, as a fact, that he had very considerable landed property (which he never lost), and which would have been seized for his debts, by process of *elegit*, if he did not pay them, for they were his own freeholds and remained in his hands till his death.

Mr. Collier suggests that he could not have been arrested on a Sunday, certainly he could not in these days, but it must be recollected that as a Papist he would be treated illegally, without having any means of redress. No doubt, that malignant Protestant—Sir Thomas Lucy—maltreated the poet because he could not retaliate, and John Shakspeare's first cousin (Lambert) kept part of his property from him for the same reason. It is possible that these infamous penal laws caused him to be robbed, so that he was really poor, though it seems more likely that his poverty was assumed as a pretence to excuse him from attending

at the hated services of the Established Church. It was a curious fact the poet's son-in-law (Dr. Hall), who was also a Papist, actually held the office of churchwarden. Probably he followed the practice of that eminent surgeon, Bob Sawyer (late Knockem-off), and was called out of church to see his patients pretty frequently.

In a very able and interesting review in the *Quarterly* of April, 1864, the writer remarked, "How few of all who read Shakspeare's works have any conception of the man, he who of all poets comes nearest home to us, with his myriad touches of nature, is the most remote in his own personality," and he adds, "the sonnets of Shakspeare afford us, if we can but understand them aright, the most certain means whereby we can get at the man. Our difficulty is to get the right interpretation of the sonnets, and know where Shakspeare is really speaking in his own person."

There is an almost insuperable barrier to this mode of measuring their author. We have not a perfect copy of his poems, nor have we an undiluted copy of his plays; unhappily Shakspeare did not publish either in his lifetime; nor, so far as we know, did he leave any manuscript prepared or intended for publication behind him; we do not even know, positively, whether he ever contemplated publication. He died, alas, when only middle-aged, and he might have hoped for many years of life. He must have known that spurious copies of his works were in circulation, yet, apparently, he took no steps to stop the publication, nor even to disavow them. The *Passionate Pilgrim* was published by a pirate about 1593 under his name, and it included some poems, and very beautiful ones—not his own. One of the most beautiful (though the least decent) was the work of Bartholomew Griffin—a Catholic poet—and his own cousin, yet neither of them took any step to put the public right. It would not appear at first sight to arise from any inherent objection to sue in the Courts, since John Shakspeare, his father, was a litigant in 1597 in the

Court of Chancery against one Lambert—his first cousin—concerning his wife's property in Wilnecote, in which suit William Shakspeare, as his heir-at-law, is mentioned ; but except in this suit and in one other instance, although engaged in large transactions buying and selling important properties, William Shakspeare himself was never a litigant in our Courts. There can be but little doubt that the reason that Shakspeare did not publish his own writings, and that he submitted to the piracy of some of them, was because (like his father) he was a Catholic. Of course, his parents had brought him up in their own faith secretly, although John Shakspeare must have outwardly conformed at a very early period, or he could not have held municipal offices at Stratford, if, indeed, he was that person. John, the shoemaker, was in his turn Master of his Guild, and he may have been the office holder. It is more than probable, if the poet's father actually held municipal offices, that his early retirement from public life was occasioned by the remorse he felt in deceitfully professing Protestantism, and it is absolutely clear that both William Shakspeare and Bartholomew Griffin were compelled to permit the pirate publishers to rob them in publishing their poems and plays, because, as Papists, they were debarred from suing in the Courts, for neither in the Courts of Law, nor in the Court of Chancery, could a Papist proceed to prevent himself from being plundered by anyone base enough to cheat him. The only way, therefore, to keep his plays for himself was not to publish them. It is, in all probability, to the infamous laws against Catholics that we owe it that we have no authentic copy of the works of our greatest poet. It may be objected that William Shakspeare could not be a Catholic because he bought and held land, and that, of course, no Catholic could do ; but the answer to this is that these laws were frequently and openly evaded. Warwickshire was full of secret Catholics, like many other parts of England, and the Executive was practically in the hands of Catholics, who, of course, would protect their brethren as far as they were able, and even the highest authorities were compelled to wink at

their recusancy. This is shown in the family history of the Griffins—generally a Catholic family—when, as will be shown presently, Lord Burleigh, himself a virulent Protestant, made overtures to them.

Shakspeare was tolerated, though a Catholic, because of his inimitable wit and lively humour, which pleased even the proud Protestant Queen, and curiously several of the players, some of his own relations, and associated with him, were Catholics like him and were driven to this life probably from the fact that no other was open to them. In it they were tolerated on account of their cleverness, for although some of them were members of the University they could not practice at the Bar, or in the other learned professions. We shall see presently how Shakspeare hated Queen Elizabeth in spite of her toleration and her patronage to himself, with the hate of one of a proscribed sect.

It could not be because printing a book was not a light thing in those days that he failed to issue his works, it would be a matter of some moment doubtless, and there cannot be a doubt either but that even in that debased period, when through the destruction of religion, learning and science were becoming displaced by ignorance and lust, the works of the great master would have been eagerly read, or why should they pirate them? and, of course, a great profit would accrue to him by their publication.

In the book of sonnets, as we have them, there is internal evidence that publication was intended at some distant (hoped for) period, for he writes of their becoming immortal, and why, if he were not a Catholic, should he not have published them as he had already published his smaller poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, if indeed he published those works? We have the testimony of Meres, writing before 1598, that some sonnets were then in existence, circulating among friends, but we cannot tell certainly (especially with the knowledge of the truth concerning the *Passionate Pilgrim*) which of them in the

pirated edition, which was published in his lifetime, are genuine and which spurious; they are most unequal and as badly mated as the fifth act of Henry VIII., which is clearly an addition of some pious Protestant writer—made to tickle the Protestant palate, or perhaps, done to make it endure the Catholic truths of the first four acts. No one with any judgment can suppose that the last act came from Shakspeare, or doubt the authenticity of much of the earlier acts. Just as in King Henry VIII., there are two minds at work. In the composition of the sonnets there are several authors, portions of them are most beautiful, most pure, and refined, whilst others are bad enough almost to justify the foolish remark of Hallam, “that he wished Shakspeare had never written them.” As a fact he did not write many of them.

It is certainly unfortunate that pirate publishers have mixed bad work with the true, but even that is better than not to have had it preserved for us. It should be the aim of a competent editor, if one could be found, to separate and cleanse the true from all impurities.

In order to give positive proof, from the eternal evidence of his writings, that Shakspeare was a Catholic, and at the same time to show how his work has been tampered with, the following instance is given :—

Coleridge writes, “King Richard II. contains the most magnificent and at the same time truest eulogium of our native country that the English language can boast, or which can be produced from any other tongue, not excepting the proud claims of Greece and Rome.” In the eighteenth line there are the weak words—“this dear, dear land,” preceded and succeeded by the same word “dear,” which is not only absolute nonsense, destructive of the sense of the passage, but ungrammatical. It is suggested that the words printed in caps, “Our Mother’s Dowry,” or some equivalent, should be substituted. There then would be some meaning in the line, and the highest possible meaning given to the words, “dear for her reputation

through the world." "Her" refers to the Blessed Virgin; "it," as Shakspeare has written it in the eighth line, would be the proper reading if England were the subject; and it is the Blessed Virgin's and not England's reputation that makes this country dear to all other nations; if England were the predicate the proper word would be "feared" not "endeared."

"This royal throne of Kings, this scepter'd isle,
 This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
 This other Eden, demi paradise;
 This fortress, built by nature for herself,
 Against infection and the hand of war;
 This happy breed of men, this little world;
 This precious stone set in the silver sea,
 Which serves *it* in the office of a wall,
 Or as a moat defensive to a house,
 Against the envy of less happier lands,
 This blessed spot, this earth, this realm, this England,
 This nurse, this teeming womb of royal Kings,
 Fear'd by their breed, and famous by their birth,
 Renowned for their deeds as far from home
 (For Christian service, and true chivalry,)
 As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
 Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son:
 This land of such dear souls, **OUR MOTHER'S DOWRY**,*
 Dear for her reputation through the world,
 Is now leased out (I die pronouncing it)
 Like to a tenement or pelting farm:
 England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
 Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
 Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
 With inky blots, and rotten parchment bonds."

Richard II., Act ii., Scene i.

* The words printed in capitals are printed in substitution of those usually printed, which Shakspeare could not have written, not only because those words are nonsense, but they obscure and destroy the meaning of the passage.

It has been objected that England was not dedicated to the Blessed Virgin until recently (by Pope Leo XIII.), but this is a mistake, just as the doctrine of the immaculate conception is supposed to be a new doctrine because it recently has been promulgated afresh. England has always been celebrated as the land of Mary's dowry, and as Shakspeare writes in this panegyric England had always been beloved throughout the world for this high cause. A special devotion in Mary's honour is shewn in one of the earliest English prayers extant—found in the book of Cerne, which belonged to Ethelwald, Bishop of Sherborne, A.D. 760. It is in these words :—"Holy Mother of God, Virgin ever blest, O Mary Immaculate, pray for us, intercede for us, disdain not to help us. For we are confident and know for certain that thou canst obtain all thou willest from thy son, our Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty, the King of Ages, who liveth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen." Curiously, this prayer also proves the antiquity of the doctrine of the immaculate conception.

Thomas Arundell, Archbishop of Canterbury, writing long after (in 1399), "To the Bishop of London and to the rest of the Clergy, his suffragan Bishops, that the contemplation of the great mystery of the incarnation in which the Eternal Word chose the holy and immaculate Virgin, that from her whom he should clothe himself with flesh has drawn all Christian nations to venerate her, from whom come the first beginnings of our redemption; but that we English, being the servants of her special inheritance and her own DOWRY, as we are commonly called, ought to surpass others in the fervour of our praises and devotions." He then describes how the power of England had increased, and ascribed its successes and prosperity to the intercession of the blessed Virgin. (Wilkins' *Concilia* Tom iii., p. 246.) [The author is indebted to the Rev. Father Robin, of the French Church, Leicester Place, London, for these proofs of antiquity.]

This devotion to the immaculate Virgin, though almost forgotten in the bloody reign of the Tudors, would be well

known and cherished in the little household of the poet's birthplace, and the poet himself must have frequently, though secretly, repeated these prayers with his good father and sweet Mary Arden. In his later years, at all events, John Shakspeare returned to the Catholic faith (if he ever renounced it), and most certainly would the young poet be reared in it, and after his marriage would not his father and mother urge him to return to it, if he had deserted it? In 1592, when his father was "convicted" as a recusant, the poet would be twenty-eight years old. Surely in that terrible period of English history, and during those twenty-eight years, many masses must have been offered up in secret in the Birthplace, probably in that cellar or Priest's hiding-place still existing.

Coleridge has remarked upon "the different manner in which Shakspeare has treated the priestly character as compared with other writers. In Beaumont and Fletcher the priests are represented as a vulgar mockery, and, as in others of these dramatic personages, the errors of the few are mistaken for the demeanour of the many; but in Shakspeare they always carry with them our love and respect. He made no injurious abstracts, he took no copies from the worst parts of our nature; and, like the rest, his character of priests are truly drawn from the general body."

Why was this, but because in his heart of hearts he knew and loved them; because he was one with them in spirit, however much circumstances compelled him to conform to the spirit of the time! It is only a low, a little mind that can see no good in men who sacrifice their lives and themselves for the welfare of others. Boucicault, in his beautiful play of the *Colleen Bawn*, followed Shakspeare in this characteristic, and some of the most beautiful pictures of his creation are the better for it.

It is marvellous how, in spite of the evidence of the first folio, persons can be found who say that Shakspeare was not the author of his plays. We have in the preface of Heminge and

Condell the clearest proofs that they came from the theatre of the poet himself, and were known to his followers as the poet's own work. They were not published for eight years after his death, and no doubt many of his friends were anxious to possess them. Leonard Digges, of University College, Oxford (he died 1635), writes thus approvingly of their appearance :—

“ Shakspere, at length thy pious fellows give
The world thy works ; thy works by which outlive
Thy tomb thy name must ;
This book, when brass and marble fade, shall
Make thee look fresh to all ages.
Be sure our Shakspere thou canst never die ;
But crowned with laurel live eternally.”

This may not be very good poetry—not quite so smooth and good as Shakspeare's but it is very excellent good sense, and the very strongest evidence of the fact that Shakspeare wrote his own plays. It is a curious thing that some of the plays attributed to Shakspeare, which certainly are not his, as Richard III., Henry VI., and King John, have the peculiar ring of Digges' Verse, a great stress always laid upon the last syllable, whilst Shakspeare's verse sails majestically and smoothly through the lines as if written in the mind, without aid or reference to the printer's art. Heminge and Condell, too, give the clearest evidence on the point. They write : “ It had been a thing, we confesse, worthy to have been wished, that the author himself had lived to set forth and oversee his own writings ; but since it hath been ordained otherwise, and he by deathe departed from that right, we pray you don't envie his friends the office of their care and paine to have collected and published them . . . absolute in their numbers as he conceived them.” And they write also : “ We have but collected them and done an office to the dead . . . without ambition either of selfe profit or fame, only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow as was our worthy Shakspeare.” And they give some little evidence of his mode of writing, which confirms that of the

belligerent and envious Ben Jonson. They describe him "as a happie imitator of nature, but a most gentle expressor of it. His mind and hand went together, and what he thought he uttered with easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

This is proof that they worked from his autographs, and, therefore, that very much of what we have is his own work and in his own words. Of course this must not be taken too literally, it does not and cannot mean that every passage and every word was in his hand-writing ; but the fair construction of it is that when they found his original writing it was as fairly and easily written as they describe.

In the face of this evidence, how is it possible to affirm that they were the works of Bacon, or of any other of the suggested authors ? Some of them were alive at this period ; all had friends. Would Heminge and Condell have been allowed to, or would they have desired to, palm them off as the works of the deceased author, if they had not truly been his ? Why should Bacon and some of the others have been ashamed of such works ? There was nothing disreputable in writing, for it was the pastime and delight of many of the great men of that period, and Bacon has left an immense quantity of his works behind him. Why should he not acknowledge some of the plays, if they had been his ? Bacon was a great scholar, and nothing would have gratified him so much as to leave behind him works which he would know would compare favourably with the greatest works of antiquity. There is a very interesting letter in the Notes and Queries of the 30th November, 1895, copied from the *Birmingham Post*, giving details respecting the history of these worthy fellows, Heminge and Condell, from which it seems that they had been partners with Shakspeare in the Globe Theatre for thirty-five years. Surely they were the best judges of what was then thought to be his work, and it is a first step in proof of the fact that his contemporaries believed them to be his.

It seems doubtful whether even *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* were really published by Shakspeare. They may have been published by pirates, or even by friends, and the dedications written for him, or he may have written the dedications himself, and the pirates may have stolen them both together. It is strange if he published them that he stopped and did not publish some others. It is quite possible that *Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis* were printed by the great nobleman to whom they were dedicated.

The great Shemetic writer, Schlegel, makes a curious mistake with regard to the printing of the sonnets. He writes that "Meres was personally acquainted with the poet, and so very intimately that the latter read over to him his sonnets before they were printed," and he adds, "I cannot conceive that all the critical sceptics in the world could ever be able to get over such a testimony."

Now Francis Meres died 1598, and the pirates did not publish the sonnets till 1609. We cannot, therefore, identify any poem on the testimony of Meres, but we can rely upon the fact that Shakspeare wrote lyrics and lent them to his friends. His testimony is very short and clear, he writing before 1598, "As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lived in mellefluous and honey-tongued Shakspeare, witness his *Venus and Adonis* his *Lucrece*, and his sugared-sonnets amongst his private friends."

Not one word about printing can be found in them, and it is clear that they were never printed by the author for the reasons before stated. So, too, with regard to his plays, we do not even know the number of them. We owe it to Meres that we know the names of twelve of them then already written, and although the additions made to them by the scribblers of his age, some of whom were very clever, cannot be lopped off so easily and satisfactorily as the fifth act of *Henry VIII.*, yet there are unquestionably very many and grievous additions to some of

them, which ought to be excised without remorse ; and certainly the gross indecencies which intrude (whether Shakspeare's or not, and they are not his) ought never to be reprinted. To anyone, who has imbibed the true spirit of the man, who can measure him in his own mind, and see him as he really is, the task is not impossible. No purer soul, no brighter intellect, no loftier mind ever lived in human being than in the gentle Shakspeare. If there is anything in his works, and as they have come down to us, there is much which is impure, or stupid, or mean, be very sure it is not his writing, but is the work of some creeping parasite added to please the corrupt taste of the age. And why should plays which are obviously not his compositions be published as his works, compare *King John* with *Henry IV.* or *Henry V.*, a child can see that they are not the work of the same man. Such plays as those of *Henry VI.*, though they possibly contain passages written by Shakspeare, could not have been conceived by him, or written as a whole, and if printed with it should be notified as not his work.

If this be so, and it is impossible to do more than conjecture what work is his, for what purpose is it that we should trouble ourselves to ascertain the truth about his family, his position, and his relations ? Only this and no more, that every little fact that can be learnt respecting him, were it only the colour of his coat, or the cut of it, is of interest, if only it helps us to know and love the man. We have his works, they are imperishable, can we not also know and cherish some of the persons and things which he loved ? We have his house and his gardens, why not learn something more about his life ? Not whether he brushed his hair, or washed himself at the pump—perhaps he had not a pump, but that may be assumed—or whether he manipulated his food with his fingers, or used bits of bread. But let us learn who were his friends and relations and his companions, whether washed or not ; and learning who were his kin, we shall the better imagine the kind of man he was, and understand the more readily how he was educated, and what was the probable course of his studies and of his life.

This is something, and it is hoped that the following pages will do something to carry out this aim.

When we remember that he was a Catholic, and that his mother and her family were strict Catholics, that his father's family must have been intensely Catholic from the fact—which will be shown presently—that they were closely connected with a monastic institution, and that they lost their income, their homes, and their position through the "Reformation," we cannot doubt as to the mode of his bringing up; and it must be remembered that, although in principle a Catholic, yet mixing as he did in the world he might have been a Protestant in his practices.

Tradition still declares that he was a frequent visitor at the house of his great uncle, John Shakspeare, at Rowington, which is still adorned with his monogram of J. S. Can it be doubted that he was also a frequent visitor to his grandfather's house at Hazeley, where the venerable Prioress of Wroxall (a member of his own family) resided till her death in 1570; where other members of his family resided much later. The Hatton registers, presently to be cited, show that his near relative, William Shakspeare (gentleman), was living there in 1599, when Barbara his wife was buried. We do not find when this William Shakspeare died, but the burial of Nicholas (his brother) is recorded in 1607. Nicholas was an honoured name in this Catholic family, perhaps because of their presumed relationship to the great Englishman Pope Adrian IV., called Nicholas Breakspear, whose arms the Shaksperes were proud to bear—a broken spear. It will be noted presently that the name Adrian was used by the Shaksperes. It was not an uncommon name in Warwickshire, though some 400 years had elapsed since his death, the great and only English Pope would be respected in Warwickshire, the home of the Shaksperes.

Surely it is a great thing to know certainly that the poet came of an ancient and honoured race, and that if the story of his youthful indiscretions have not been highly coloured because

of his renown—little people are so fond of sticking their own weaknesses upon the characters of the great—that at all events they were not hereditary or family faults, but the outcome of an exuberant temperament, unhappily unchecked by proper control, and let us hope that these bad habits were thrown off—if ever they existed—as quickly as they were assumed. Let us get at the fact that our poet was a gentleman by birth and education, and decent people will only too gladly throw a veil over his youth and regard him as the pure and honourable man that he was when he came to years of discretion, and utterly disregard and repudiate the slanders and detractions of his enemies and pretended friends. Well might he exclaim, in reference to so many of his late admirers, “Oh, save me from my friends.”

CHAPTER II.

SHAKSPERE'S YOUTHFUL INDISCRETIONS.

*No might nor greatness in morality
Can censure 'scape ; back wounding calumny
The whitest virtue strikes ; what king so strong
Can tie the gall up in a sland'rous tongue ?*

TO estimate properly the value of the traditions respecting the youthful sins of the poet, one must first of all realise his position and surroundings, but were it not for the serious and altogether unworthy use which the shrieking school of Shaksperian scholars have made of the few facts of the private life of the poet (which have come down to us), in disparagement of the authorship of the works, not one word would have been wasted over this unpleasant subject. What have we, at this date, to do with the sins of his youth ? It is interesting, no doubt, to learn all we can about the man, and even about the boy, as it is certainly of interest to learn what we can of his race and parentage ; but what have we to do with his boyish offences—of which, let us hope, that if he were guilty of them, as most men have been, he repented of them fully at the time. Even Mawworm must admit that the youth of many good men, and the manhood, also, of many more, have been stained by private vices. Some besotted

people think it is an advantage, and in these times the cry is, "The greater the sinner the greater the saint," and with some pious sects is a favourite axiom, and they think it edifying to proclaim and detail all the vile sins they have been guilty of, or which they can remember, or perhaps invent, for some of these religious people are not entirely to be depended upon even in cataloguing their offences. They are fond of citing St. Paul as an instance of youthful depravity, as if St. Paul were the better for it. But it is, surely, wiser and more charitable to draw a veil even over the sins of the greatest saint, and certainly few classical scholars have devoted their abilities, as modern Shaksperian scholars have done, to endeavour to rake up from ancient cesspools long forgotten occurrences, which ought not to be re-called, and to publish the names of the partners of the sinners. Writers like Mr. Tyler can, if they choose, very easily prove the want of virtue in scores of the Court ladies of the time of Queen Elizabeth, and of other times and in ladies, too, not so courtly; and even in the time of Charles the Second many women and girls, it is recorded, were of light conduct, and some people have not even spared the character of the head of the Church of that date. It shocked the morality of the Spanish Ambassador (or, it is said that he said it did) to see the head of the Church, good Queen Bess, dancing, but poor Charles's conduct was certainly less edifying in some respects, though infinitely more lovable than hers. In those days people had lost the practises of their religion, through the great reformation, and each one having become a director and guide for himself, did as he liked best, or as his passions urged him. It was not until the advent of the House of Hanover that the practise of virtue became, not desirable perhaps (for even then it was felt to be a kind of nuisance), but as a thing to be respected—when it could be found—and an outward veil, in those respectable times, was drawn when people went raking, and the rake, "on the loose," would wear a pair of green spectacles, and this was considered as a fair disguise, and a sufficient sacrifice to appease the respectabilities and to

justify the wearer in visiting improper places without being recognised by his friends, if he happened to meet them in these places, which it would seem was a likely contingency.

The Irish as a race have many terrible faults ; but they are to be congratulated upon the purity of their women, at least where the practise of the Confession had been preserved. Poor Voltaire, who did so much to destroy the Catholic faith in France, admitted the value of the Confessional in restraining the vices of the people, and wished he could invent a mode of retaining it, without the encumbrance of religion, simply for state protection.

William Shakspeare lived in an age when vice was everywhere triumphant, when the will of God was supplanted by the lust of man ; he was spared, indeed, being an actual witness of the horrors excited by the conduct of the greatest tyrant the world had ever seen, the first supreme head of the Church of England, who tempered the blessings of matrimony with murder, when he felt disposed to try a new wife. Why the wretch did not abolish matrimony altogether when he was about it is one of the problems of his history ; it would have been so much more sentimental, but brave King Hal had no sentiment. The unparalleled brutality of his conduct was not greatly lessened in many respects under that bright occidental star—his remarkable daughter. Henry had freely opened the flood gates of lust, of murder, and rapine to any villain when a poor Christian despising his gospel would not conform to it. These seem strong words, but they are true, and we need not produce any proof, though there is no difficulty in doing so ; we have only to search his statute book to proclaim it.

The following passages are taken from a little book by the author entitled, "On Highgate Hill" (third edition, 1889) slightly altered, or rather, adapted to this argument. They were written in derision of the Dissenters sentimental grievances, which are as nothing compared to the treatment of poor Catholics :—If an unfortunate Catholic were wilfully to

hear mass, he forfeited 100 marks (£66 13s. 4d.); for saying mass a priest forfeited double the amount, with the addition, in both cases, of a year's imprisonment; and unless they renounced Popery and swore allegiance to the Head of the Church—a deadly sin upon the conscience of a Catholic—they were disabled from inheriting, purchasing, or otherwise acquiring lands. Of course these laws were being continually evaded, but the punishments were only too often, and very often, inflicted. They could not keep or teach schools, under pain of perpetual imprisonment (unquestionably the great poet infringed this law, for tradition has assigned to him the desk of the second master of the grammar school). Of course they could not hold any public office, yet it is said that the poet's father had held them in his younger days, but in his later years he grew ashamed of it, and stayed away so often when summoned that he was finally—probably to his full content—put out of the Council.

Poor Catholics could not keep firearms or weapons of defence, even though the country was swarming with sturdy beggars. They were continually increasing, notwithstanding the merciful King Henry had them strung up by the dozen by the road-side, without trial, and for no other offence than for that of asking for charity, perhaps asked in God's name. The King had robbed all the houses of charity, to which formerly the pious had given alms to help to feed the poor. There were then no poor-houses, and it was thought merciful to put the poor creatures out of their misery. Yet still, in spite of this kindness, the number continually increased. To a merciful man this state of things must have been, as doubtless it was to William Shakspeare, simply intolerable.

A Catholic could not go within ten miles of London or travel five miles from home without a licence. This law, again, the poet unquestionably defied; in fact he was made a law-breaker by the constitution of his country, and naturally would fall into other sin-breaking more easily.

He could not bring any action at law or suit in equity, so that any one who chose might plunder a Catholic with impunity, for he had no redress and could not be heard in the courts to complain of wrong. To this infamous law do we owe it that we have no correct edition of the great poet's works ; and that for three centuries the minds of our children and people have been poisoned by the impurities which the robbers of that period have fixed upon them, and the grovelling pedants of this have ignorantly preserved.

The punishment against contravention of all these silly enactments (as we should now regard them) was grave and even terrible—severe fines, forfeitures, and loss of liberty—and some of the severer penalties were so horrible that it would pollute the page simply to record them. To say that they were inhuman would be a mild reproach. The authors of the new religion found it absolutely necessary to protect its infancy by acts which were ferocious and atrocious. They were retained with all their ferocity during the short reign of the boy-murderer, King Edward VI., who put to death his own relations upon unfounded denunciations, or allowed it to be done. Queen Mary, of course, repealed these horrible laws immediately she came to the throne ; but she, unhappily, pursued some of the severities introduced by her father, though only, as she supposed, for the spiritual welfare of her subjects, and in cases (in her eyes) of actual and corrupting sins. Through this conduct her memory is loaded with reproaches which it is difficult to meet or to dispose of. This unhappily, gave Queen Elizabeth and her advisers an opportunity (which her wicked counsellors only desired) of re-enacting, in all their horrors, the bloody laws of her impious father. By the first statute of her reign she repealed her sister's merciful acts and re-enacted and revived her father's horrible crimes, and some of these acts exist at this day. All the statutes, articles, and provisions made against the See Apostolic of Rome since the 20th Henry VIII., including the 26th and 36th of the King, by which the sovereign of

England was declared to be (and this is still law) the supreme head of the Church, were then revived.

By the 1st of Elizabeth, chap. 2 (still unrepealed), anyone writing or speaking in derogation of the Prayer Book in any interludes, plays, songs, or rhymes, or by other open words (this would seem to catch or curb Shakspeare, and probably stopped the appearance of his *Henry VIII.* during his lifetime), for the first offence they were fined 100 marks; for the second, 400; and for the third offence they were to incur the penalties of *præmunire* under the statute of 16th Richard II., and this penalty was enforced for many other simply religious acts on the part of Catholics, and even poor Queen Catherine incurred this penalty of *præmunire* for her contumacy in refusing to plead before Henry's special Divorce Court. Shakspeare in his *Henry VIII.* records the King's judgment upon his wife, one of the most infamous deeds even of the Bluff King Hal. The putting out of the King's protection was the most ferocious part of this sentence, for that placed them in the category of wild beasts, and like wild beasts anyone might hunt them to death, aye, and put them to death if he liked; and to this terror the supreme head of the Church subjected his good wife.

The 5th of Elizabeth was passed for the preservation of the Queen's dignity (her own) from dangers from the followers of the usurped power of the see of Rome. "As these have grown into marvellous outrage and licentious boldness, and now require more sharp restraint and corrections of law than hitherto in time of the Queen's most mild and merciful reign"—this from her preamble, no one else probably but herself thought her reign either mild or merciful. What had happened to justify these words? and to render greater severity necessary? Absolutely nothing. The truth is that the eyes of the people were beginning to be opened to the terrible state of tyranny under which they lived. There was no fear for the personal safety of this wretched woman, because the religion of her enemies taught them to respect her person; but there was

grave fear that the Protestant religion was growing into contempt. She, the most shameless libertine that ever disgraced the position of Queen, a woman whose unbridled lust was the derision of her subjects, who now began openly to dispise her authority as God's vice-regent upon earth, and to proclaim the assumption on her part of such power as ridiculous and worse. She dreaded, too, far more, a discussion as to her own legitimacy, and she felt compelled to make the prosecution of all offenders, who dare open their mouths, more speedy and certain. She did her best to destroy, and went a long way towards destroying, the manhood of the nation. It is wonderful how much she accomplished by twenty years' resolute government. It must be admitted that this tyrannical statute, whilst it increased the terror of a prosecution by the State, did put, at least apparently, some slight limit to the power of the subject to set the law (that is the act of killing and slaying) in motion when they pleased, and it was enacted that in future it should not be lawful—as it had been—for anyone to kill and destroy another unless, indeed, that other one should be found executing a summons or sentence of the Court of Rome. For these terrible offences, or even the suspicion of them, anyone might still disembowel or destroy a fellow-creature with impunity as if he were a dog, and do it, too, of his own sweet will and divine judgment, without the trouble of trial or impeachment.

This amiable statute being found to be too merciful and benevolent, in the exercise of her divine mission of Pope, Queen Elizabeth, in the 13th of her reign, inflicted the penalty of death for granting absolution, even by writing ; all aiders and abettors to be merely subject to *præmunire* ; all those who did not disclose these offences to be subject to the penalties of high treason, which are too horrible and brutal to detail in writing. Good Queen Bess ! How easily she earned that title.

William Shakspeare was only seven years old when this statute was passed ; but it was used constantly during his life, and he must have suffered horribly under its tortures. He, a

member of a Catholic family—although his own father is said to have been a renegade must have had many friends and relations, for whose safety he would be in perpetual terror. Those whom he loved, those too, perhaps, whom he loved the dearest of all, were in the greatest danger. He must have seen and known the poor old prioress of Wroxall, his own relation, the Lady Jane Shakspeare, who was still alive, and who died at the old house of his grandfather at Hazely in 1570. What a youth he must have had! We who live in the peace and quiet of to-day cannot conceive the misery and degradation of those who lived whilst the Church of England, as by law established, was in swaddling clothes. The horrors of that time were hardly exceeded by those of the French Revolution, nay, they were worse in some respects, for the sword fell upon those who were most to be respected, upon the just and the righteous, and the meek in spirit. A poor creature brought up as a Catholic having, perhaps, become a Protestant, and who had lived, possibly, a life of sin and luxury, or, it may be, one who was guilty only before God, of a denial of his faith, at the close of his life, with the judgments of the next world before him, would with wild terror long for the relief of absolution and the consolations of his faith. Who had a right to come between him and his God? Were his wife or his mother to aid him in carrying out his desire they, too, became amenable to the most terrible punishment, and not merely to deprivation of goods and imprisonment for life, but they were tortured on the rack, until their bones burst from the sockets, till they confessed and published the names of those (most dear to them) who had participated in religious rites, and who also would forthwith be submitted to the same torture and punishments which were actually destroying them on the rack and depriving them of the self-control and reticence necessary for the safety of others. If this is doubted let anyone read the correspondence of the Cecils, Queen Elizabeth's strongest ministers.

The mind of man, so strangely is it constituted, can assimilate itself to any condition of things—if it is known to be

THE GENTLE SHAKSPERE.

inevitable and almost without repining, though not without suffering. Do we love those who cause all this suffering? Can we regard them without absolute horror? If we think of the utter selfishness which underlies their actions and causes them to trample on their fellow creatures we cannot but detest the conduct of the chief actors of that time. To one like William Shakspeare, who possessed the keenest sympathy for others, whose soul was filled with inexpressible tenderness and compassion for the sorrows and sufferings of those around him, this must have been terrible, and the youth and manhood of William Shakspeare must to him have been well-nigh intolerable. No wonder if it had a deadly and benumbing effect on his sensitiveness, and for the time hardened him. He submitted to it in pain doubtless, but still as an inevitable evil; he, perhaps, for a time lost all hope and all belief in God's goodness, and then he may have done what many have done before, and will do again. He may have adopted the old heathen idea of enjoying the day, and the enjoyments came to him, perhaps, in a grosser form, it will do so to the young and buoyant, even without much wickedness and desire. Who shall blame the lad, under the circumstances of his youth, if he grew reckless. It is said he mixed with toppers, if he mixed with the world at all he could not well escape it. Drinking was common and almost universal. Sir Nicholas Lestrangle writing of this period—the times of James and Charles I.—refers to the low ribaldry, obscenity, and profaneness of the people with whom Shakspeare must have passed most of his time. How thankful should we be that the reformed Church of England has so purified the nation that we find things very different. Nowadays one can go anywhere without any fear of hearing such things, there is no bad language in public-houses, or theatres, or chapels, or in the streets. Nowadays no one need go wrong, we English Protestants set an example of holy walking to the whole world. Yet, after all, there are some of the young men of our own time, with all these valuable Protestant lights and without the horrors of Shakspeare's life, who still "sow their wild oats," as it is mildly designated, and no one thinks the worst of them

when they tire and settle down respectably, and no one ever thinks of raking up the dirt through which they have waded to a decent life. We thank God if our boys see the folly of their wicked ways in time, and come to live a pure and decent life. Why should we pry into the poet's early days? It is said, and it may be true, that young as he was, he had loved some beautiful girl of his own rank in life, perhaps higher in rank, in vain, and that disappointed in his love, as many beside him have done, he wickedly and foolishly gave himself up to strange women, and his forced marriage with a girl, or rather matured woman, when he was but a mere boy is cited in proof of his wickedness.

Curious people have tried to pry into the history of poor Ann Hathaway, but they have failed, probably because she had none. She may have belonged to Shottery, and she may have lived in the cottage usually called hers, although there is not a shadow of proof of it. There was a respectable yeoman family of her name at Shottery, who, doubtless, at one time, occupied that house; but there were also some very indifferent people also resident there, whose immorality only too common at the period is recorded in the Baptismal Registers. She may have been one of them. The only thing positively known about her is the evidence of her marriage bond (which does not give the name of her father), the bondsmen, however, seem to have been Shottery people; but she is described as a resident of Stratford, and surely if she had lived in Shottery she would not have been so described. Very curiously, but no doubt for a purpose, the license was taken out in a false name—Anna Whately, of Temple Grafton. This was done, no doubt, to deceive the boy bridegrooms relations; the bond, of course, would give the true name, but the marriage would take place in the false. This disposes of Charles Knight's amiable suggestions regarding the proceedings at the wedding, which he seems to think was carried out with the approbation of the parents. That Ann Hathaway had some relatives, poor people one a joiner, is tolerably clear from Lady Barnard's will. One

of them, probably through her aid, long afterwards came to reside at Stratford ; another was a resident in Gloucestershire. This is, however, admitted on all hands that there is no tradition indicating her birthplace ; and, in 1750, the master of the Grammar School at Stratford (the Rev. Joseph Green) probable a Shakspeare himself, asserted that she was supposed to have been born at Luddington, a village not far off.

Certainly the facts of this marriage are not respectable. It seems clearly proven, and there does not seem to be much difference, even if we accept the defence foolishly offered by some enthusiastic admirers that a sort of espousals was used, like those adopted in the East by the Jews, which was a family arrangement prior to, and which ended in a regular marriage in due course. It is needless to write that such a state of things, though tolerated, was never respected or respectable in this country. Our marriage laws were always very loose, and it is, unhappily, too common in practice to marry under the circumstances of the poet's marriage ; and such a marriage is undoubtedly good in law—in Wales it is much practised still under the name of Bundling. But such a practice is unquestionably bad and immoral, and inexcusable, and such a pretence does not mend matters. But what is that to us ? Did not the poor boy atone for it by a life-long penance ? Surely he was punished enough for his vices, for he married her. And she, poor woman, in securing such a husband, if she had any refinement of feeling (which is not improbable), she, too, must have endured a life of misery, if she loved him, in seeing this man she had married tied to her who was not worthy of him.

The answer to this fulsome nonsense is given by Shakspeare himself in a most unlikely play to find it, *The Tempest*, by the mouth of Prospero, who, in betrothing his daughter to Ferdinand, thus addressed him :—

“ There, as my gift, and thine own acquisition
Worthily purchased, take my daughter : but
If thou do'st break her virgin knot before

All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy right be minister'd,
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
To make the contract grow ; but barren hate,
Sour-ey'd disdain, and discord, shall bestrew
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly,
That you shall hate it both : therefore, take heed,
As Hymen's lamps shall light you."

And how did Ferdinand answer :—

“ As I hope
For quiet days, fair issue, and long life,
With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,
The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion
Our worser genius can, shall never melt
Mine honour into lust, to take away
The edge of that day's celebration,
When I shall think, or Phœbus' steed are founder'd
Or night kept chained below."

And Prospero replied :—

“ Fairly spoke ;
Sit there, and talk with her, she is thine own."

This is a clear account of Shakspeare's idea of a betrothal, its effects and rights, and as clear a condemnation of its abuses. Alas ! Alas ! Did the poor poet write these sad words from memory of his own bitter lot ? His only boy had died ere he wrote it, one daughter had an only daughter, and another was unmarried, so that his hopes of children supplying his place were gone. He had possibly few quiet days, and no hope of long life in view, for he had his sins ever before him ; and his view of happiness was in a great measure exemplified in his father's example, who had a long life, and probably with quiet and true happiness. It is a curious thing that Shakspeare should have applied the Catholic doctrine of the sanctity of marriage

in this play to people whose religion, judging from the main incidents of the play, and especially from the blessing of Gonsalo upon the young couple, must have been Platonic rather than that of the Catholic faith. Although Prospero, in the epilogue, breathes the true spirit of the Christian religion almost in its own form when he speaks of his ending being despair, "unless I be relieved by prayer ; which pierces so, that it assaults mercy itself, and frees all faults." Surely this is the true Catholic doctrine.

Poor Ann Hathaway ! Has not her memory suffered long enough ? Let her be forgotten ; or, if we give her a thought, let us remember the love and devotion of the poet's best-beloved daughter to her poor, common-place mother. There can be no doubt of her father's great love to his daughter, so there can be none of the daughter's pure and precious love for her mother. Foolish people talk of the poet's indifference to his wife, as evinced by the fact that he forgot to mention her in his will, and that he left everything to his daughter. Yes, and if we look at the circumstances under which that will was made, can we wonder at it ?

Good Mistress Hall ! She lost her husband and father by the hand of death almost together, and she gave her whole life, with the most beautiful devotion, to her sorrowing mother. It is a picture worth studying—the beautiful love for each other of these two widowed women ; better far than looking for scandals which should be forgotten. What is more admirable than the tender love for a mother, not, perhaps, because she had anything lovable about her, but because with her she grieved with infinite tenderness for the loss of the noble soul who had gone before her. Who, with this picture before him, can doubt that the poet was good and kind to this poor creature ? Of course he was ; he could not be otherwise. His was too noble a nature to stoop to cruelty or neglect of anyone.

This good woman, Susannah Hall, died the 11th of July, 1649, and this is the record of her which her friends placed over her tomb :—

“ Witty above her sexe, but that’s not all,
Wise to salvation was good Mistress Hall ;
Something of Shakspeare was in that, but this
Wholy of him with whom she’s now in blisse.
Then passenger, hast ne’re a teare
To weep with her that wept with all ?
That wept, yet set herself to cheer
Them up with comfort’s cordial ;
Her love shall live, her mercy spread,
When thou hast ne’re a teare to shed.”

This wretched doggerel was, deservedly perhaps, effaced to make room for another monument, but it has been preserved by Dugdale. It is a valuable testimony to the tender love of the poet’s daughter. The unworthy sneer at William Shakspeare’s impiety can be disregarded when it is remembered that this was written by narrow-minded bigots who could see no religion in a Papist, and were doubtless glad to record their hatred of the Catholic faith ; perhaps, too, they credited too readily the stories which the gossiping old vicar of that day relates of the cause of the poet’s death.

And what is to be said for the youthful excesses, for the foolish drinking bouts in which the poor boy was said to have indulged ; it seems that the greatest sin was in the fact that he drank strong ale, so he did—and very good it no doubt was—and so did many others of higher rank in life, and many do so still with great enjoyment—although in these degenerate days men have neither the strong ale to drink nor the strong heads to bear it ; there is nothing very terrible or novel in this practice. Less than a hundred years ago it was a custom for people of good position, for the parson or any other country gentlemen, to brew a great hogshead (some fifty gallons, or perhaps it was a hundred) of real strong October ale, and when

it was fit to drink the parson and the country gentlemen by turns called their brother parsons and friends together to drink this grand brew of old October ; and they would gather and would not part for several days, till every drop of that cask was consumed, and most of them were probably very drunk the whole time. What would people say of this now ? Yet it certainly occurred and was a common practice under the Georges, and this was not a hundred years ago ; and the same set of people, or perhaps a better class, would invite their friends to a week's whist. They would not go to bed, but would sit at the card-table the whole week ; and it was their pride not to use the same pack of cards twice, and to throw them round them as they sat at play, as they sat up day and night at the table (having their meals handed round, and eating them at the card-table) it is said that towards the end of the week the waste cards around them would be knee deep. This actually occurred in the good old days, when George the Third was King, right down to the battle of Waterloo, when French manners and a greater refinement prevailed ; or if we want more recent specimens of excesses, we have only to go to our own Universities, or to those of the great German people, and we shall find, probably to-day, a vast number of German students who are only seasoned casks, fit to drink unlimited quantities of beer. They can't very well get drunk, it is so poor in quality, but they do manage to make beasts of themselves, and that it is very certain William Shakspeare did not do. No doubt he got drunk like any other gentleman of his day—the good old time. It is a dreadful thing, but a common thing to say that a man got drunk like a gentleman, but it is the best that can be said under the circumstances. What was William Shakspeare's sleep under the crab-apple tree compared to the semi-refinement, semi-barbarism of a week's "drunk" under George the Third ? Considering this state of things was so near us, and the crab-apple business so very far from us, why trouble ourselves about it ? There is no reason to suppose that his companions were not generally young gentlemen like himself, or that there was anything except fun and frolic in the transaction, though after

all—this is a poor excuse—he only did what was commonly practiced at the time. Of the charge of deer-stealing, nothing more can be said of it than that it is very probably true, and that anyone who had the health and strength, and opportunity which William Shakspeare had, would not, or could not, or perhaps should not resist it. It is, doubtless, very shocking that common people, who have no property of their own, and perhaps no knowledge of sport, should kill your game by ignoble means—snaring and other unfair ways of pot-hunting—it is very vexing and, of course very improper, but William Shakspeare did none of these things. He did nothing mean or beneath a gentleman, he did a boyish and a plucky thing, he not only poached but thrashed the keepers, and no doubt these boys were very angry with Sir Thomas Lucy, who seems to have been a fool, and of course young Shakspeare hated fools, as all men of sense should, and probably he broke the law. But when Sir Thomas Lucy ordered Shakspeare and his companions to be whipped like low-born poachers, he did a brutal and a cowardly act. One can hardly conceive anything more galling than his conduct in treating a gallant lad in this way, and the more galling because as Papists they had no redress. William Shakspeare was a true descendant of archers, he had a keen love of sport and a good knowledge of the science, as his poems and plays demonstrate. No doubt, as a boy, he had visited his uncles in the forest and hunted with them, and it was an infamous indignity to treat him as a poacher, and to whip him like a dog; a cowardly brutal excess of power, for which the old idiot fully deserved to be lampooned and held up to ridicule, and even at this day it is impossible not to sympathise with the young poet and take his part against his persecutors. A fine thing, indeed, for the Donellys and the old women (who could not hunt if they tried) to howl over the lad on this account, he did nothing but what any schoolboy of the present day would be proud to do. And because he was degraded most shamefully by his own cousin, and was besides utterly miserable—probably through his unhappy marriage, for it must have been a terrible blow to his father and

mother, whom doubtless he loved—tied down to a woman much older than himself—possibly of a domineering temper and jealous nature—and especially when it is said, and probably with truth, he had loved deeply one more fitted to him, is it to be wondered at that he ran away to seek his fortune, if indeed he did run about it. He perhaps had a longing for the actor's life and felt that he could succeed in it ; he was probably pressed to take this step by his own cousin, the Greenes, who were successful actors. We do not know what he had to bear, what his temptations were, or his hopes. It certainly looks like deserting the wife—he had apparently been compelled to marry—but it is quite possible that he left her comfortably with her parents, if she had any, at her own wish, in order to make a home for her. She had unwisely married a boy who had no means of his own, and, of course, no home. She may have, very sensibly, induced him to leave her as his only chance of making her a home independent of their families, or it may be that she went with him, and lived with him in London from the very first, or as soon as he could get lodgings for her. We know absolutely nothing of the circumstances, and it is unlikely that we ever shall do so. Most probably the early days of his marriage were unhappy, such imprudent marriages generally are, for they bring straitened circumstances with them, and this being so the poet himself was naturally silent about them, and we cannot now learn any of the particulars, even if it were desirable that we should do so, indeed it is quite immaterial whether we ever should do so or not. What we do know is very certain and very much to his honour, that when he was able to keep his wife she lived with him, though probably she was no honour to him and he could not take her among his fine friends ; but even this we do not know positively, she may have been clever and presentable in society. The tradition is that he lived very quietly, but that he associated with all the best people in town and country, in fact, that he lived as he was born, as a gentleman, and that is quite sufficient for us to know. His religion would compel him to live much apart from his neighbours—did not his tastes

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make him do so ? It is said that he was fond of good living, of good wine, and good wits—who is witty and wise that is not so ? Why should he not enjoy, to the utmost, the good things of this life ; He who in his youth had suffered so much from so many evils, and probably from poverty among them, would be right to enjoy them. Good old Chaucer had a miserable youth, but in old age he lived to enjoy himself, and who grudges him the better change from his early miseries ? Why should we grudge the poet his few enjoyments ?

These captious critics have two things to do, either to prove their case against him, and that is impossible—for where are the witnesses ?—or to hold their tongues, and this seems to be equally difficult. 'Tis a pity that it is so.

CHAPTER III.

SHAKSPERE'S SCHOLARSHIP.

*"To justify this worthy nobleman,
So vulgarly and personally accused."*

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

A GREAT deal of nonsense has been written about Shakspeare's learning and his ignorance, but, fairly considered, one set of critics annihilates the other, and leaves the matter pretty nearly where it was—in obscurity. If we take the fair measure of his contemporaries, we shall, perhaps, get nearest to the truth, and that is, that whilst he was not a great scholar, as these great creatures who style themselves scholars would have it, yet that he had quite sufficient scholarship for his purpose. That he could translate a minor classic fairly is admitted by Camden. Shakspeare did not require his learning to enable him to teach Latin and Greek to little boys—though, by the way, that is probably what he did do, and how he acquired what he possessed—but he used it to get at great truths which he wished to utilise in his teaching; and it cannot be denied that the stage was his pulpit, from which he preached far better sermons than most of the orthodox clergy of every denomination.

The Donelly school are especially strong on this point, and, indeed, if this stool slips from under them their arguments lose their only foundation. Donelly draws an absurd distinction between the man and his works. The name of the works he spells, as if it were a person, "Shakespeare," in accordance with the modern mode of spelling; but the name of the "Man of Stratford," as he calls him, he spells as he spelt it himself—Shakspere. This is very fine, but it is also very superficial and utterly erroneous when he thinks that the "works Shakespeare" spell Bacon. This is his account of the works. He writes: "The man who wrote the plays was one of the most learned men in the world; not only in that learning which comes from observation and reflection, but in book lore ancient and modern, and in the knowledge of many languages. He was a profound scholar, and a most laborious student; he had read, in their own tongue, all the great, and some of the obscure writers of antiquity; he was familiar with the languages of the principal nations of Europe; his mind had compassed all the learning of his time and of preceding ages; he had pored over the pages of French and Italian novelists; he had read the philosophical utterances of the great thinkers of Greek and Rome."

This to begin with is not a fair description of the works, but it is probably intended to be a portrait of Lord Bacon, and although it is exaggerated, yet upon the whole it may fairly pass. For he was undoubtedly very learned in all these particulars; but how does it fit the works of Shakspere? In Bacon's own works you may undoubtedly find very much learning, modern and ancient; but can the same be said generally of the poet's works? Fairly tested, there will be very few passages found which were unknown to the general student of the time, and perhaps these had been obtained from the great Lord Bacon himself. Mr. Donelly's arguments are based upon the assumption that there was an intimate and confidential relationship between the two men; if he denies that his whole argument falls to the ground, for unquestionably

Shakspeare used most of these plays in his theatre, and certainly without disclosing the name of the author ; probably they were all acted at some period as Shakspeare's. Now there is nothing more likely than the fact that such an intimacy existed : if it did, and Lord Bacon condescended to associate with the low-born player (like the three Earls presently to be mentioned), what is more likely than that Lord Bacon opened to him the stores of learning which he possessed, and gave him those very facts or thoughts which have so puzzled enquirers, and demented Mr. Donnelly. It will presently be shown that Shakspeare was certainly closely allied to Lord Bacon by marriage, if not by blood. Once assume the fact of an intimate acquaintanceship between the poet and the philosopher and the whole puzzle is solved. Some of Mr. Donnelly's scraps are, doubtless, genuine bits of Bacon, but very possibly they were not stolen but given by Bacon himself to the great poet, to be worked up in his own wonderful manner, just as he worked up *Campion's* noble oration—to be mentioned presently. But there is one fact which entirely disposes of the idea that Bacon was Shakspeare, and this seems to have been overlooked by Mr. Donnelly. Setting aside these curious bits of learning, does the scope and tendency of Bacons' works agree with that of the plays ? Is their teaching, in fact, that which Bacon would care to enforce ? The answer must be in the negative. Bacon's views and opinions were not in the least in accord with Shakspeare or with his works, certainly not with the man depicted by Donnelly and his friends. When was Lord Bacon ever known to be desirous of upsetting the philosophical infidelity of the Established Church, which he practiced himself, and restoring the thralldom (as it would be to him) of the Catholic religion ? Did he, in fact, care a straw about religion, except as a philosophical conundrum ? But the writer of the works (called Shakespeare) was a true Catholic, a humble earnest soul, who thought no honour so great as that of fearing God. This is a fatal blot on the notion that Bacon was the author of Shakspeare's works.

But putting that aside, what is there in the works, or out of them, which can disprove the fact that William Shakspeare wrote them? Certainly not the opinion of his contemporaries, for Meres records that he was esteemed their author, and he (dying long before Shakspeare) gave the names of twelve of his most important plays. If it be once admitted that he wrote these or any of them there is an end of the argument.

Now there is another class of detractors who, whilst they have maliciously endeavoured to destroy Shakspeare's character for scholarship, have done him good service in disposing of the exaggerated arguments of the Donelly school. These men have grubbed below the service, and they assure us that whilst Lilley's Latin Grammar is responsible for some of the bits of "profound learning" which is to be found in them, there is nothing very deep in the rest, and that the whole of them may have been procurable (chiefly from translations) and partly by one who had a little learning and could translate a little for himself, or had friends to help him. They omit to state, perhaps they did not know it, that many of the poet's friends had considerable learning, and may have helped him. Indeed, it is fact that many of the actors associated with Shakspeare in his theatre were University men, who from being Catholics could not follow either of the learned professions. Might not these men assist their chief, and furnish him with curious bits of learning to adorn his plays? These tit-bits of learning are seldom very profound, and not always of much service to the actors of the pieces, or are they sometimes much to the point. Indeed, some of them almost remind one of the American orator who, on concluding his speech, by request of the audience tipped them a little Latin, and gave them "*multum in parvum*," "*tu quoque*," "*semper idem*," and "*vox populi*." The French in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, or the *Twelfth Night*, might be taken from any grammar or conversation book, and is not always correctly taken. The Latin in *Julius Cæsar* is the most trifling; so it is in *Henry VIII*. Many of his scraps of Latin are *légals* terms, which he may well have

learned when a boy. But there is a tradition which may account for his possessing a considerable amount of classical learning, and this tradition is supported by a fact. He is said to have been second master of the Grammar School, and a desk (this is the fact), the desk of the second master and always occupied by that functionary, has always been known in the school as Shakspeare's; indeed, so strong and clear was the tradition that the Corporation presented it to the Shakspeare Birthplace, and it is there to this day. Aubrey, who lived not very long after him, related that a Mr. Beers informed him that Shakspeare understood Latin pretty well, because he had been in his younger days a schoolmaster in the country—evidence which very greatly strengthens the tradition. When actually nothing is known of the life of the poet as a boy, when the story that his father took him away from school at a very early age (twelve or fourteen) in order to assist him in his trade, is disposed of, by the fact that he was a man of good private means and never engaged in any kind of trade, it is rather difficult to dispose of this tradition as wholly illusory, and it probably is actually true: many schoolboy traditions are accurate. A second master in a school may very probably qualify himself to translate a classical author for his own purposes. Lord Campbell suggests that there is no list of second masters at this school; possibly not, but that omission does not dispose of the fact that there were such individuals, which is distinctly proved. It has been suggested that from the use of scraps of Latin, chiefly law terms, Shakspeare had once been an attorney's clerk. Very likely, and except for his imprudent marriage and his religion he might have become an attorney. Certainly the little we have of his writing confirms this idea; it is of the legal kind, and unlike the ordinary handwriting of the period. Though, for what we know, this court hand may have been taught in the schools. There is a further fact which the grovelling school of detractors insist upon, and which Mr. Donnelly insists upon also. He writes: "His family were illiterate; his grandfathers and grandmothers all signed their

names with crosses." And he gives this delightful picture of his position, every statement of which is either distinctly untrue or without a shadow of proof and utterly improbable. "His father was a bankrupt when he went to London; his wife had just been delivered of twins; his home was dirty, bookless, and miserable, his companions degraded, his pursuits low; he had been whipped and imprisoned."

To take these statements *seriatim*, the fact that his grandmothers and grandfathers signed by crosses is no proof at all that they could not write, the fashion of signing deeds had not then come in, and many great scholars and Church dignitaries, nobles, and kings, on this idea could be proved to be illiterate; but is it true that his grandparents signed with a mark? As a fact only one of the four can be proved to have executed any deeds at all. Agnes Arden was not Mary Arden's mother. So that Mr. Donnelly is here plainly convicted of publishing a gross untruth, for which he had no justification whatever, a mere impudent assumption, utterly false. The bankrupt father was no bankrupt, but a substantial landowner, whose estates were worth £500. The dirty, bookless, and miserable home is an idle fiction, or a libel; for he had none of his own, and it is utterly absurd to call his father's home dirty, or bookless, or miserable. This is done solely on the strength of a statement that in 1552 he had been fined 12d. for a nuisance in Henley Street. It is extremely doubtful whether John Shakspeare lived in Stratford before his marriage, which probably did not take place till long after the date usually assigned to it, and the John Shakspeare, who was fined for a nuisance, may or may not have been a relation. That he was bookless is equally absurd, as it is done in the present time, to avoid death duties, goods and chattels were frequently given away before death, when they came under a well-known class, that of a *donatio causa mortis*, but as a fact the will or administration of John Shakspeare has not yet been found, so that it is impossible to say whether he had books or not. This is another gross assumption, and indeed, a misstatement of Mr. Donnelly's. There is a jury panel, of the

date of 1596, at Stratford, on which is written—"Mr. Shakspere, one book." Mr. Dyce—of course, to square the fact with his theories—asserts that this was the poet. It is far more likely to refer to his father, but in either case it proves very little. The twins was a fact, and the only fact of this tirade, and possibly not an unpleasant one. Some people have been found to endure even twins and to love them, and therefore the misery does not certainly come in here. We know nothing whatever of any companions of the poet, except one—the poor child, Griffin Roberts—who could hardly be old enough at his death to be very depraved, indeed tradition speaks favourably of him, and this companionship is an honour to Shakspere, for it shows the goodness of his heart. As to the whipping and imprisonments, these traditions seem to be too strong to be discredited. Is it not mean and contemptible always to be harping upon it? What schoolboy is there who has entirely escaped flogging when at school? And how many, even of the sons of the nobility, have been guilty of criminality of this kind, and of worse kinds. A great nobleman recently deceased, was convicted, when a boy at school, of stealing money. The poor hen-pecked Earl of Shrewsbury wrote to the famous Bess Hardwick (when his countess) of a poaching scrape one of his sons had fallen into, and if the old Forest Rolls are examined it will be found that this sin of deer-stalking was not confined to mere youths, but was common to many mature persons—even bishops and the higher order of the clergy were convicted and fined for it. The only thing to be deplored is that the foolish knight, Sir Thomas Lucy, should have degraded his own relation by having him whipped, even were he guilty of such an offence. It is said, indeed, that the girl whom the poet loved was a daughter of Sir Thomas Lucy, and that this and not the poaching was the true cause of the whipping. The Shaksperes, though tolerably well to do, had fallen in position owing to the Reformation, and Sir Thomas had been one of the chosen instruments in the persecution of the Catholics, so that a matrimonial alliance would have been extremely distasteful to him.

It is difficult to get at the truth of these matters so long after the event, but it seems that this poaching did not occur in Charlcot Park, but in an adjoining one, which was that of an outlaw, and before inquest and seizure by the Queen anyone had a right to sport on it. Sir Thomas Lucy, it is said, wished to annex it to his own grounds ; but the Queen, from tenderness to the culprit owner, refused to seize it, and the vindictive knight assumed a power to protect it, which he did not possess, and which the Stratford lads, who loved deer-stalking, naturally resented by thrashing his keepers—no doubt high sport for them. Not many years ago the lads at the Universities thought it right to fight the bargees, without any provocation and merely for the fun of the thing ; and no doubt many a dignitary of the Church of England, and probably some living now, have amused themselves in this manner. Very sad, no doubt, but nobody thinks a penny the worse of them, and young Shakspeare was rather to be applauded for his pluck and energy than to be seriously blamed ; to libel him at this time for it is not only absurd, it is wicked and mean.

Some of the grubbers who would deny Shakspeare's scholarships have been delighted to find that occasionally he made a false quantity, and on this account they would condemn him as a dullard ; but this is absurd, some of the cleverest men who ever lived could not write Latin verses to save their lives, and many have been capable of making any number of false quantities. The power to do these things is like playing the fiddle, it must be acquired in very early life, or not at all, and kept up, too, for it is a power soon lost with most men, and it is not, perhaps, a very wonderful thing when acquired. These great scholars sadly mistake the real nature of scholarship. The learning of Latin or Greek, or even of mathematics, is chiefly valuable as a mode of training the mind, and very frequently it fails in its purpose ; although a vast quantity of facts may have been acquired, or crammed, the recipient may not be able to utilise them, or he may not have obtained the advantage which which such a training generally gives. Such scholarship is often

a mere matter of memory, just as the acquirement of some kinds of mathematics, as geometry may be obtained by memory without compelling the acquirer to exercise the power of reasoning, or even to understand what he learns. Granted that Shakspeare was not a great scholar in the sense of having a correct knowledge of classics, had he not a great knowledge of men, of their motives and feelings, and could he not play upon men as if they were machines by the power of his language? How could he be greater? Hunter has a sensible note on this matter, he writes, Add. 24,494, folio 29 :—

“It is no proof of his want of learning that he read Plutarch in North’s translation. Again the false quantities mentioned in Farmer’s notes on *Hamlet* are no decisive proof that he never read the authors in whom these proper names occur, he might forget the quantity, or he might not think it worth regarding, or he might submit to the necessities of his verse. That he quotes from Lilley’s grammar is no proof that he had never gone beyond it; the passages he found there were more familiar to him than any others, as they are to most scholars, and besides, they were more familiar to his audience. It does not do to quote them to prove his learning; but neither does the quoting of them show that he could not, if he would, have quoted other authors.”

Verily, these critics annihilate each other—here is good old Hunter holding up the cudgels to prove that the poet might not be an absolute dullard; and poor Donelly and his school, with little Latin and less Greek, were so much impressed with Shakspeare’s display of learning, collected from Lilley’s grammar, that they thought the writer of the plays must be the most wonderful scholar upon earth, so probably his knowledge of Latin was compared to that of the whole of them—poor Donelly, he draws inspiration from his own ignorance of the classics, and then swallows without question the twaddling scandal of the old Parish Clerk of Stratford-on-Avon, who in 1689 (when he was nearly a hundred years old, or thought he

was) fancied that he remembered that the poet was apprenticed to a butcher, and afterwards became a servitor at a London theatre. The poor old fellow might know the term butcher, but the "servitor" has surely been put into his mouth by the enemy who invented or related this story.

And if he had not great scholarship, he had the more important art of seizing upon that which is worthy, and of using it for good purposes ; and more than this, he not only could pick out great and noble thoughts and put them into good language, but he could translate them into poetry. Many men are possessed of common sense, but how few can translate common language into heroics ? Shakspeare could feather his words, or as the Greeks said, wing them. What is there in any writing so admirable as the power with which he clothed his words ? He made them felt, and at this date, though times have changed and the world has greatly altered, yet they still make people weep or laugh as much as they did in his day ; and for beauty of expression did any poet but him ever write the like ? There are no rules by which you can tie down a true poet, he will soar above all conventionality and defy every rule of the schoolmaster, as was said of old, *poeta nascitur, non fit*. It matters not whether he was tutored or not. These wonderful scholars have taught many youths since his time—have they ever produced one like him ? or are they equal to him themselves ? A thousand times, "No !" Even Donnelly would admit this, could he bring himself to believe that Shakspeare wrote Shakespeare.

The author is indebted to one of his sons for the following statistics. He has examined thirty-seven of the plays, and he finds that, instead of containing quotations from all the languages of Europe, ancient and modern, they are directly drawn only from the Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish languages, with the exception of one word of Greek (*misanthropos*) in *Timon of Athens*—this is not an extravagant display of the language of that country. Eight of the plays

only, out of the whole number, contain more than a dozen words of Latin, not counting repetitions of the same word. There are only forty-nine Latin quotations of more than one word in the whole of the plays, of which fifteen have two words, eight have three, and twenty-six have more than three. The majority of the longer quotations, as well as those of one, two, and three in number, contain words the great majority of which would probably be found in Lilley's Grammar, or any primer, or would be met with in ordinary conversation; and especially would they be used by the Catholic priests of the period. Generally they were used colloquially, and, with very few exceptions, the youngest usher in any school, set to teach the smallest boys their rudiments, might produce them off-hand. Some of it is dog Latin, and much of it incorrect; but this may be attributed to the ignorant people who copied them for the pirate publishers.

The French is equally trivial, and confined to sixteen plays only. Most of it is colloquial and purposely incorrect; and, moreover, was pronounced by the speaker in an English fashion, or the puns could not have been hung upon it.

In the whole of the plays there are eight Spanish words, in no case more than two words at once.

There are only three passages from the Italian containing more than three words, and these are of little moment.

To take particular plays—*Romeo and Juliet* naturally has much foreign tongue in it, and can boast of three languages. There is the Latin, Act ii., Sc. 3, "Benedicite" and "Jesu Maria"; the French, Act ii., Sc. 4, "Bon Jour"; with this profound piece of Italian, "Alla stoccato," Act iii., Sc. 1.

Really one might fairly conclude from this display of learning that Shakspeare knew nothing of Italian.

In two of the plays there is not a single foreign word.

In *The Tempest* we have the word "sans."

In *Othello* no less than five foreign words, mercifully divided between four speakers : "Sans," "certes," "facile," "almain," "exsufflicate." One can understand how he got that word "facile," but not "exsufflicate." What an enormous number of books he must have read, modern and ancient, to have picked it up.

King Richard II. has "habitable" and "pardonnez-moy."

King Richard III. has three simple words ; *King Lear* the same number, but divided amongst two speakers ; *King John* three single words.

Twelfth Night is really a very learned play. The Clown in one place says : "Cucullus non facit monachum," and "primo, secundo, tertio, triplex," all in a breath.

Sir Andrew : "Dieu vous garde, monsieur."

Viola : "Et vous aussi votre serviteur."

Measure for Measure has "Benedicite," and the wise saw about the cowl repeated.

As You Like It, "Bon jour, Monsieur le Beau."

Midsummer Night's Dream, "Videlicet."

Cymbeline, "Mollis" and "Mulier."

Much Ado About Nothing (a motto suitable to Mr. Donnelly) has one word, "Palabras."

The Comedy of Errors has three words, "Ergo," and "Respice finem," which must conclude this analysis.

The whole of the serious bits of Latin are very trifling, only thirty-six, and are here given. They occur in thirteen plays :—

King Henry VIII., Act iii., Sc. 1.—Wolsey : "Tanta est erga te mentis integritas, regina serenissima."

"Ego et rex meus."

Twelfth Night, Act i., Sc. 5.—Clown : "Cucullus non facit monachum."

Measure for Measure, Act v., Sc. 1.—Luc. : The same.

Titus Adronicus, Act ii., Sc. 1.—Dem.: "Sit fas aut nefas," "per Styga per manes vehor."

Act iv., Sc. 1.—Tit: "Magne Dominator poli.

Tam lentus audis, scelera ?

Tam lentus vides ?"

Act iv., Sc. 2.—Dem.: "Inter vitæ, scelerisque purus. Non eget Mauri jaculis, neque arcu."

Act iv., Sc. 3.—Tit.: "Terras Astræa reliquit."

Pericles of Tyre, Act i., Sc. 1.—Gower: "Et quo antiquius eo melius."

Act. ii., Sc. 2.—Thai: "Lux tua vita mihi."

" " " "Me pompæ provexit apex."

" " " "Quod me alit, me extinguit."

" " " "Sic spectanda fides."

" " " "In hac spe vivo."

Julius Cæsar, Act iii., Sc. 1.—Cæs.: "Et tu Brute."

King Henry VI., Part II., Act i., Sc. 4.—York: "Aio te, Æacida, Romanos vincere posse."

Act ii., Sc. 1.—Glo.: "Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ."

Act ii., Sc. 1.—Car.: "Medice teipsum."

Part III., Act i., Sc. 3.—Rut.: "Dii faciant, laudis summa sit isto tuæ."

King Henry IV., Part II., Act v., Sc. 5.—Pist.: "Semper idem." "Absque hoc nihil est."

Act v., Sc. 5.—Pist.: "Si fortuna me tormenta spero me contenta."

King Henry V., Act i., Sc. 2.—K. Hen.: "In terram Salicam mulieres ne succedant."

Merry Wives of Windsor, Act iv., Sc. 1.—Eva: "Lapis, Singulariter nominativo hic hæc hoc, genetivo hujus."

Taming of the Shrew, Act i., Sc. 1.—Tra.: "Redime te captum quam queas minimo."

Act iii., Sc. 1.—Luc. : “Hac ibat Simois, hic est
Sigeia tellus.” “Hic steterat Priami regia
celsa senis.”

Act iv., Sc. 4.—Bion. : “Cum privilegio ad impi-
mendum solum.”

Love's Labour Lost, Act iv., Sc. 2.—Hol. : “Vir sapit qui
pauca loquitur.”

Act iv., Sc. 2.—Hol. : “Fauste, precor, gelida,
quando pecus omne sub umbra.”

Act v., Sc. 1.—Hol. : “Satis quod sufficit.”

” ” ” “Novi hominem tanquam te.”

” ” ” “Ne intelligis domine.”

” ” Nath. : “Laus Deo bene intelligo.”

” ” ” “Videsne quis venit.”

” ” Cost. : “Honorificabilitudinitatibus.”

Surely any clever schoolboy could have collected these little pieces without much trouble or reading. Mr. Donnelly may perhaps reply that he was not referring to what was given in the original, but to that which was translated ; the rejoinder to which is that the man who gave these quotations, in doing so has given hostages against himself that he was incapable of deeper research. The display of learning shows his depth. He had no pretensions to great scholarship, and made none. That was not his art, perhaps not his forte ; and he is not to be judged, and his works are not to be gauged by such a measure. If Shakspeare has given utterance to great thoughts found in other writers, he obtained them indirectly or gave utterance to similar thoughts himself.

Allied to the question of his scholarship, is that of his generosity as a critic. Gifford, in proof of his “envious and malignant disposition,” wrote—“If silence be a proof of envy, what becomes of Shakspeare ? With a single exception I cannot discover that he ever mentioned one of his contemporaries with commendation, or bestowed a line of praise on any publication

of his time." What can be more unfair than this? Shakspeare has literally published nothing himself, but where has he condemned any one of his competitors? A man is not bound to criticise even if he does not admire, nor is he bound to give his opinion if he does. Very few writers ever attacked him and these few he did not care to answer. Shakspeare was essentially a retired and diffident man, he might have an opinion upon the value of his own work, and he must have loved it, who could write as he did without feeling pleasure in his work? He who did so would be more than human. He was cut off from the majority of mankind by his religion, he was in the world, but not of it, and he cared little for its sentiments. Who will blame a deaf mute for not joining in conversation?

Well we cannot all agree on these points, but who will not agree with Dryden, who was a great poet, a true-hearted man, and no mean judge, that learned or not "there was no subject of which any poet can write, but he would produce it much better done in Shakspeare," and the learned Hales (writes Rowe) "says, and was wont to assert, that since the time of Orpheus and the older poets, no common place had been touched upon when Shakspeare had not performed as well."

Sir John Suckling (1658, p. 14) wrote:—"Our gentle Shakspeare's easier strain, 'comparing him to Ben Johnson, who was envious of him, and whose 'malignity,' which he does not deny, but endeavours to excuse, proves better than praise how superior Shakspeare was to his competitors.'" How is it that, except in the libraries of the curious, we see and hear nothing of his competitors? Why are Shakspeare's works read and admired, whilst theirs are utterly forgotten and neglected, except that his are so much better.

CHAPTER IV.

CAMPION, JESUIT AND MARTYR.

A VERY important personage in the life of Shakspeare was Edmund Campion. Few people know even the name of this great scholar and eminent priest; some, indeed, may know that he died the death of a traitor in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the readers of Hallam may remember his famous trial at Westminster Hall, on the 14th November, 1581 (almost forgotten), when he was condemned. This trial was described by Hallam "as unfairly conducted, and supported by as slender evidence as any, perhaps, that can be found in our books." The Chief Justice (Wray) who presided was a Catholic at heart, and this "shameless travesty of justice, in which he took an part, is said to have shortened his days." Francis Goldie, S.J., "Life of Campion," is cited for this strange statement, because otherwise it might not be believed that any judge could have possessed so much feeling, much less a Chief Justice. But if the man is forgotten, his words will live as long as the English language exists. He it was who wrote the famous speech in defence of Cardinal Wolsey, which Shakspeare adapted and put into the mouth of Griffith, or Griffin (Shakspeare's actual cousin), who was gentleman usher of Queen Catherine of Aragon.

Shakspere knew Campion and his fellows, and loved them because they were friends of his family, and frequently, when coming on their visits, must he have trembled for their safety, though Campion himself was protected, as far as anyone could be protected, from the hell-hounds of Burleigh and Queen Elizabeth by two great personages in their day—by the famous Earl of Leicester and Lady Stonor, the widow of Sir Edward Griffin, the Queen's late Attorney-General (Shakspere's cousin). The poet was only fifteen years old when Campion was murdered, but he must have met him frequently, not only at Kenilworth, but in his father's house ; for Campion was one of those dangerous persons who, at the risk of his life, went about secretly administering the sacraments of his Church to the living and dying, and especially to the poor souls who for worldly gain and to save their estates for their families had, to the danger of their souls, pretended to conform to the new doctrines, which had now been tinkered up afresh, and had been made to look as much like the true article as possible, so that the unwary might be deceived by them.

But Campion was more than this, he was the author of the famous "Ten Reasons," a book which made a tremendous sensation at the time—an audacious publication—which, through its European fame and extraordinary renown, only added heat to the fury with which Burleigh and Cecil were now persecuting the Catholics. This book was secretly printed at Stonor, from a press which the Lady Stonor (Sir Edward Griffin's widow) had, at great risk, permitted to be erected there.

Campion, in his Oxford life, has earned a great reputation, especially for eloquence. We know from his writings how great was his intellectual vigour. He is said to have been even more powerful as a speaker, and when Queen Elizabeth visited the University, Campion—who was appointed Proctor and Public Orator before even he took his degree of doctor—delivered the orations in her honour. It was said of him that he was "the

star of all the gay pageants, and learned discussions, by which Oxford entertained the Queen on her visit to the University." The young men of his day endeavoured to imitate his style of writing, and his speech, his very dress and mannerisms, and prided themselves upon being called *Campionists*.

Cecil, the Prime Minister (during his visit to Oxford), was so much struck by his ability that he promised him his patronage and support.

Campion wrote much, but it has chiefly perished, his little book—on the History of Ireland—serves now to represent his works, though it is known that he wrote several tragedies in Latin, when living in Prague, but these unhappily are lost.

The complaisant University elected Queen Elizabeth's favourite Dudley, Earl of Leicester, as the Chancellor; and Campion, as the Public Orator, was called upon to deliver a funeral oration over the body of his murdered wife—poor Amy Robsart—got rid of, doubtless, to gratify Elizabeth's lust for her husband, and in the hope, probably, that the Queen would marry him; but Elizabeth preferred the pleasures of matrimony without its inconveniences. Warned, probably, by the horror excited by her father's conduct, she dare not play with the axe as an instrument of divorce, and, perhaps, she did not possess so nice a conscience as his—one which made him stick at adultery, though he revelled in murder—as, indeed, did his daughter when she dared.

The Earl of Leicester greatly admired Campion, and to him he dedicated his work on the history of Ireland.

Poor Campion, who was a Catholic at heart, like so many others in the University, was driven at last to leave it, or to make a clear profession of the new faith at St. Paul's Cross in London. This mandate came from the Grocers' Company—a

body of men particularly capable of distinguishing the niceties of religion—from whom he held his fellowship, and for conscience sake he sacrificed the grocers' sixpences and his brilliant prospects, and became that poor despised creature, the hunted priest. It was in one of the priests' holes, when he was in hiding at the peril of his life, that he wrote his sketch of Ireland, and it was in the priests' hole at the house of Mr. Yates, of Lydford Grange, Berkshire, that he was at last captured. Poor Mr. Yates was then himself a prisoner in London, on account of his own religion, and he had begged Campion to call to comfort his wife and some poor Catholic women who had assembled there. He had been tracked to the house, and a hundred men surrounded it and with hammers tested the walls to discover the priests' hole. They broke down the barriers before them until they discovered Campion, with two other priests. They were placed backwards on their horses, their elbows pinioned behind them, their hands tied in front, and their feet fastened beneath their horses' bellies; whilst to Campion's hat was attached—the fashion with perjurers in those rough days—a paper on which was written in large letters, "Campion, the seditious Jesuit," so was he led to the Tower. Four days afterwards he went, by the water side, to the house of his patron, the Earl of Leicester, and there, for the first time since the festivities at Woodstock, found himself face to face with the royal favourite and his royal mistress, who were accompanied by the privy councillors. They told him that they found no fault with him save that he was a Papist, and to that he answered: "This is my greatest glory." The Queen "offered him life, liberty, riches, honour, anything he might ask," if he would give up his religion; but he refused. Unfortunately for himself, he treated the offer with such scorn; it was resolved to have recourse to torture; and he was racked on the 31st July, 1581. Mind, this great scholar had done no wrong of any kind, unless in standing up for and in practising the rites of his religion; but this was the method employed by "good" Queen Bess to teach the new religion to

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her people. Some of Campion's companions, under the awful torture of strained muscles and dislocated limbs, had told some secrets, but Campion remained firm. Lord Burleigh was obliged to own, in a confidential letter to Lord Shrewsbury, that from Campion they could extort nothing of moment. It was given out, however, by the wily Cecil, a trick he often played to mislead the public, that Campion had confessed ; but he on being appealed to stated that although in his agony he had confessed to some of the houses at which he had stayed, which were well known, yet he had discovered nothing of secret, nor would he, "come rack, come rope." He admitted that the rack was more bitter than death ; yet when the gaoler, after he had been racked again, asked how he felt his hands and feet, he answered : "Not ill, because not at all." When called upon to plead, at his trial, one of his fellow-prisoners had to lift his arm, which was made helpless through the tortures of the rack.

Cecil and Burleigh failing in their brutality, next endeavoured to damage his reputation as a scholar, and the Bishop of London was ordered to prepare a series of public discussions. In the Chapel of the Tower, without a book to aid them, and without even a chair back to rest upon, after the torture of the rack, Campion and his fellow prisoner were brought face to face with the Deans of St. Paul and Windsor, and other Protestant disputants, who were seated at a table and supplied with any number of works of reference. A Catholic present states, that Father Campion looked ill and weary, his memory nearly gone, his force of mind nearly extinguished, yet he won admiration from all by his ready answers, and by his patience under the coarse abuse and ill-timed jests of his well-fed and well-prepared adversaries. They jeered at him, and tried to confound him, threatening him with further torture and death ; yet in spite of all he had the best of the argument. There were four discussions, and each proved mortal to the Protestant cause, and this being discovered they were at length stopped. The following doggerel rhymes were sung in the

streets in honour of Campion's victory, for he carried the people with him :—

Let reason rule and racking cease,
Or else for ever hold your peace ;
You can't withstand God's power and grace,
No, not with t' Tower, and racking place.

After the shameful trial Campion was tied upon a hurdle, which was fastened to the tail of a horse, and he was dragged through the mud and stones to the gallows, and there hung, and this horrible deed happened, and all these scenes were passing, when the young boy, William Shakspeare, was but fifteen years of age. It seems wonderful that he who passed his youth under such a fire could retain the faculty of humour, or the power of laughter and of creating laughter ; yet we can read in his works, in the tender compassion and infinite charity they display, how deeply these scenes had entered his soul. There is a sadness even about his mirth, which is never entirely obscured, and which breaks out in almost every line of some of them. The sadness and submission to his lot so remarkable in the play of *Romeo and Juliet* is but the outcome of these deplorable events, which were everywhere passing about him. Horrible as they are, men got used to such scenes. The Cecils, with their racks, were too strong for them, but no one can love those who are responsible for them. It was a necessity inseparable from his public career that he should play before the tyrant Elizabeth, whose immorality had caused the death of poor Amy Robsart, and whose fate would be well known to every Warwickshire peasant, and to Shakspeare with them, and accordingly the poet did not love her, and therefore was it that upon her death he refused to write a line in her honour. These facts are to be commended to the consideration of those who really desire to study the life of the poet, and they will help to understand it far more readily than the imaginary sketches of those who only desire to detract from his memory, but the reason for drawing attention to the life of Campion is that he is

responsible for much of the matter and for some of the very words of the play of *King Henry VIII*. The following is the passage from Campion which Shakspeare may have copied from old Hollinshed, who had seized upon it for his work, and published it in 1587, but it is more likely that it was only a portion of the matter supplied by this great writer, who, very possibly, inspired the play, and perhaps wrote much of it, his style being singularly like that of William Shakspeare. The following is clearly Campion's :—

“They all hated the Cardinal. A man undoubtedly born to honour, I think, some Prince's—no butcher's sonne, exceeding wise, faire spoken, high-minded, full of revenge, vicious of his body, lofty to his enemies were they never so bigge, to those that accepted and sought his friendship, wonderful courteous, a ripe scholar, thrall to affections, brought abed with flattery, insatiable to get and more princelike in bestowing, as appeareth by his two collegdes at Ipswich and at Oxford, th' one suppressed with his fall, th' other unfinished, and yet as it lieth an house of students (considering all appurtenances) incomparable through Christendom, whereof Henry the VIII. is now called founder because he let it stand.” “A great preferrer of his servants, advauncer of learning, stout in every quarrel, never happy till his overthrow, therein he showed such moderation and ended so patiently, that the hour of his death did him more honour than all the pomp of life passed.”

This is the speech which Shakspeare put into the mouth of of his kinsman Griffith :—

This cardinal

Though from an humble stock, undoubtedly,
Was fashioned to much honour. From his cradle
He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one ;
Exceedingly wise, fair spoken, and persuading :
Lofty, and sour, to them that loved him not ;
But to those men that sought him sweet as summer.
And though he were unsatisfied in getting
(Which was a sin), yet in bestowing, madam,
He was most princely ; ever witness for him

Those twins of learning, that he raised in you—
 Ipswich and Oxford !—one of which fell with him,
 Unwilling to outlive the good that did it ;
 The other, though unfinished, yet so famous,
 So excellent in art and still so rising,
 That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue.
 His overthrow heaped happiness upon him ;
 For then, and not till then, he felt himself,
 And found the blessedness of being little ;
 And, to add greater honours to his age
 Than man could give him, he died fearing God.

Mr. Simpson thus writes of Campion : “ He possessed an eloquence that succeeded beyond that of all contemporary rivals in transfusing the vigour and polish of Cicero into a language that was only struggling into form.” Father O’Carrol, of Clongowes Wood, S.J., writes : “ The panegyric on Cardinal Wolsey is certainly one of the peculiarly great passages in the works of the English dramatist.” The whole dialogue in which it occurs is declared by Dr. Johnson “ to be above any other part of Shakspeare’s tragedies—perhaps above any scene of any poet.” Poor Dr. Johnson. He had not studied under Aldis Wright, who declares that there is no talent in this play, but only sentiment ; and again, Father O’Carroll writes : “ Shakspeare makes this difficult and hazardous speech successful ; he makes it so from the eloquence that is in it, from its power of raising pure, and generous, and noble feeling, or, to use his own words, put into the mouth of Catherine, ‘ with thy religious truth and modesty.’ ”

Shakspeare makes this speech play the great part in the dialogue ; he makes it suddenly win over to a fallen foe admiration and forgiveness, on the part of an embittered and injured sovereign, in the hour of the last agony of death ; he shows us that there is no improbability in supposing its eloquence to be sufficient to produce this extraordinary change. Shakspeare’s critics find the development of Queen Catherine’s last thoughts most pathetic and sublime, and, above all, gentle and natural.

Dr. Johnson writes : "This great scene is tender and pathetic, without gods or furies, or poisons or precipices, and without the help of romantic circumstances." Had he lived to this day he might even had added, "and without the assistance of Worth's gowns," for now-a-days a play owes more to the assistance of the milliner and of Sir Augustus Harris than to the poor author. The great actress, Mrs. Siddons, thought the character of Queen Catherine the most natural of all Shakspeare's female characters. O'Carrol observes : "What is in Griffiths' speech with regard to Wolsey's character is almost all from *Campion*, in words no less than sentiment, touched, indeed, anew by the great master ; but surely, delicately, and sparingly touched. Shakspeare seems here to have been almost afraid of painting the lily,' 'his changes are very slight, but at the same time they are subtle and testify by their very delicacy to deep and accurate thought, he has made a radical change in the order of presenting the ideas, in order to adapt the passage to his work ; he has toned down something that in *Campion* was very brilliant, and gloriously illustrated a portion that was more subdued.'" "Instead of *Campion*'s 'moderation' Shakspeare has 'the blessedness of being little' ; instead of 'did him more honour than all the pomp of life passed,' Shakspeare ends magnificently, 'And, to add greater honours to his age than man could give him he died fearing God.'"

This single passage from his works is of more value, in giving us a fair estimate of the man, than hundreds of pages of absurd panegyric or abuse ; it shows him at work, it exhibits his methods, and enables us to measure his powers. Would, or could, Lord Bacon have written in this way, he might, indeed, have had the intellectual power, for he was a great man ; but, had he the will : no one but a sincere Catholic and a good man could possibly have written this play. It must go down to posterity as the joint production of Edmund *Campion* and William Shakspeare ; no one can safely separate their parts in it, or assign any part positively to either writer.

CHAPTER V.

“KING HENRY VIII.”

THE first four Acts of this magnificent play are here printed, nearly *in extenso*, not because they are more beautiful than some of his other works ; indeed, they are fitter more for the cabinet than for the stage ; but in this play may be read more of Shakspeare than in all his other works put together. Shakspeare, as the play proves, was a Catholic, not a very pronounced one perhaps, in practice, but unlike his father, he sought no office, and never conformed to the Protestant religion. There were thousands like him at the time, and the Court was compelled to wink at their wickedness, or they must have put half the nation into prison or to death.

Shakspeare knew and felt bitterly, no doubt, the misery of his position, and he determined to make an effort to leave behind him one play which, after his time, should bring home to people the truth respecting the changes in religion and the true causes of those changes. Did he not do this with the hope of doing good ? To suppose that this play was written for publication in his lifetime is absurd ; that Queen Elizabeth would permit the infamy of her mother to be placed upon the stage for the common people to gaze at, is ridiculous. The man who dare write such a play, even without publication, would assuredly loose his head ; or, at least, the Tower would be his only resting-place, and the rack his daily portion till he died.

Nor could Shakspeare ever dream of its being played before King James. That modern Solomon could not have tolerated it on account of its exposure of the true motives of the Reformation in England, in which he had participated, for thereby he himself would be held up to ridicule. It would be extremely interesting to know when it was first played. There is no proof whatever that it was played when the Globe Theatre was burnt to the ground, as it has been asserted ; and it would seem impossible that it was ever played until after the Restoration. Then, indeed, balanced by the absurd anti-climax of the fifth Act, it might be tolerated, but only because it was Shakspeare's. It could not possibly have been played in his lifetime, although, when the man was gone, then, indeed, it might have been tolerated in honour of his memory, for any work of the great master would naturally excite interest and enthusiasm, and this work must have long been talked about—long before it could be produced. Did Shakspeare write it in this hope ? It is needless to say that the fifth Act is not Shakspeare's. The play ends beautifully, and most pathetically, with the death of Catherine of Aragon, and there can be little doubt that, as the play was originally written, Katherine died upon the stage, and the entrance of Capucas was another interpolation to make her exit and the termination of the play less sad, and the anti-climax of the fifth Act less palpable. Shakspeare had written up to the great death scene, and no doubt Catherine's last words are spoilt by these additions, this little scene of Capucas itself forming a minor anti-climax. Who, after seeing her die, would care what became of Anne Boleyn ? and who, knowing how worthless she was, would care to hear about the baptism of Anne's child ? Had the piece ended with the execution of Miss Bulleyn it had been more natural, and in that case there might have been a fifth Act ; but the whole motive of the Act, as we have it, is out of place, and Shakspeare himself would never have been guilty of chronicling such utterly repulsive festivities. The critics, indeed, have blamed Shakspeare for causing Queen Catherine to die before the death of Queen Elizabeth. He was

guilty of no such anachronism ; that was clearly the work of his adapter. Those who would learn the true life of William Shakspeare can here read it in most beautiful thoughts, far better than in his sugared sonnets, which were but the work of his lighter moments, and which, though beautiful indeed, are but as the snow-white cloudlets clinging to the mountain tops of this grand structure. Had Shakspeare written nothing beside this play he would stand out far above any other poet, for this work, as he intended it, is truly sublime. In it he has poured out the heart-griefs of his life, and he has left it, as he intended, as his chiefest labour and his best monument.

THE PROLOGUE.

I come no more to make you laugh : things now,
That bear a weighty and a serious brow,
Sad, high, and working, full of state and woe,
Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow,
We now present. Those that can pity, here
May, if they think it well, let fall a tear ;
The subject will deserve it. Such as give
Their money out of hope they may believe,
May here find truth too. Those that come to see
Only a show or two, and so agree
The play may pass, if they be still and willing,
I'll undertake may see away their shilling
Richly in two short hours. Only they
That come to hear a merry noisy play,
A noise of targets, or to see a fellow
In a long motley coat guarded with yellow,
Will be deceived ; for, gentle hearers, know,
To rank our chosen truth with such a show
As fool and fight is, beside forfeiting
Our own brains, and the opinion that we bring,
To make that only true we now intend,
Will leave us never an understanding friend.
Therefore, for goodness' sake, and as you are known
The first and happiest hearers of the town,

Be sad, as we would make ye : think ye see
 The very persons of our noble story
 As they were living ! think you see them great,
 And follow'd with the general throng and sweat
 Of thousand friends ; then in a moment, see
 How soon this mightiness meets misery :
 And, if you can be merry then, I'll say
 A man may weep upon his wedding-day.

ACT I.

SCENE I. London. An ante-chamber in the palace.

*Enter the DUKE OF NORFOLK at one door ; at the
 other, the DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM and the LORD
 ABERGAVENNY.*

Buck. Good morrow, and well met. How have ye done
 Since last we saw in France ?

Nor. I thank your grace,
 Healthful ; and ever since a fresh admirer
 Of what I saw there.

Buck. An untimely ague
 Stay'd me a prisoner in my chamber when
 Those suns of glory, those two lights of men,
 Met in the vale of Andren.

Nor. 'Twixt Guynes and Arde :
 I was then present, saw them salute on horseback ;
 Beheld them, when they lighted, how they clung
 In their embracement, as they grew together ;
 Which had they, what four throned ones could have weigh'd
 Such a compounded one ?

Buck. All the whole time
 I was my chamber's prisoner.

Nor. Then you lost
 The view of earthly glory : men might say,
 Till this time pomp was single, but now married
 To one above itself. Each following day
 Became the next day's master, till the last
 Made former wonders its. To-day the French,
 All clinquant, all in gold, like heathen gods,
 Shone down the English ; and, to-morrow, they
 Made Britain India : every man that stood

Show'd like a mine. Their dwarfish pages were
 As cherubins, all gilt: the madams too,
 Not used to toil, did almost sweat to bear
 The pride upon them, that their very labour
 Was to them as a painting: now this masque
 Was cried incomparable; and the ensuing night
 Made it a fool and beggar. The two kings,
 Equal in lustre, were now best, now worst,
 As presence did present them; him in eye,
 Still him in praise: and, being present both,
 'Twas said they saw but one; and no discerners
 Durst wag his tongue in censure. When these suns—
 For so they phrase 'em—by their heralds challenged
 The noble spirits to arms, they did perform
 Beyond thought's compass; that former fabulous story,
 Being now seen possible enough, got credit,
 That Bevis was believed.

Buck.

O, you go far.

Nor. As I belong to worship, and affect
 In honour honesty, the tract of every thing
 Would by a good discourser lose some life,
 Which action's self was tongue to. All was royal;
 To the disposing of it nought rebell'd,
 Order gave each thing view; the office did
 Distinctly his full function.

Buck.

Who did guide,
 I mean, who set the body and the limbs,
 Of this great sport together, as you guess?

Nor. One, certes, that promises no element
 In such a business.

Buck.

I pray you, who, my lord?

Nor. All this was order'd by the good discretion
 Of the right reverend Cardinal of York.

Buck. The devil speed him! no man's pie is freed
 From his ambitious finger. What had he
 To do in these fierce vanities? I wonder
 That such a keech can with his very bulk
 Take up the rays o' the beneficial sun
 And keep it from the earth.

Nor.

Surely, sir,
 There's in him stuff that puts him to these ends;
 For, being not propp'd by ancestry, whose grace
 Chalks successors their way, nor call'd upon
 For high feats done to the crown; neither allied
 To eminent assistants; but, spider-like,
 Out of his self-drawing web, he gives us note,
 The force of his own merit makes his way;

A gift that heaven gives for him, which buys
A place next to the king.

Aber. I cannot tell
What heaven hath given him,—let some graver eye
Pierce into that; but I can see his pride
Peep through each part of him: whence has he that,
If not from hell? the devil is a niggard,
Or has given all before, and he begins
A new hell in himself.

Buck. Why the devil,
Upon this French going out, took he upon him,
Without the privy o' the king, to appoint
Who should attend on him? He makes up the file
Of all the gentry; for the most part such
To whom as great a charge as little honour
He meant to lay upon: and his own letter,
The honourable board of council out,
Must fetch him in the papers.

Aber. I do know
Kinsmen of mine, three at the least, that have
By this so sicken'd their estates, that never
They shall abound as formerly.

Buck. O, many
Have broke their backs with laying manors on 'em
For this great journey. What did this vanity
But minister communication of
A most poor issue?

Nor. Grievingly, I think,
The peace between the French and us not values
The cost that did conclude it.

Buck. Every man,
After the hideous storm that follow'd, was
A thing inspired; and, not consulting, broke
Into a general prophecy; That this tempest,
Dashing the garment of this peace, aboded
The sudden breach on't.

Nor. Which is budded out:
For France hath flaw'd the league, and hath attach'd
Our merchants' goods at Bourdeaux.

Aber. Is it therefore
The ambassador is silenced?

Nor. Marry, is't.

Aber. A proper title of a peace; and purchased
At a superfluous rate!

Buck. Why, all this business
Our reverend cardinal carried.

Nor. Like it your grace,
 The state takes notice of the private difference
 Betwixt you and the cardinal. I advise you—
 And take it from a heart that wishes towards you
 Honour and plenteous safety—that you read
 The cardinal's malice and his potency
 Together ; to consider further that
 What his high hatred would effect wants not
 A minister in his power. You know his nature,
 That he's revengeful, and I know his sword
 Hath a sharp edge : it's long and, 't may be said,
 It reaches far, and where 'twill not extend,
 Thither he darts it. Bosom up my counsel,
 You'll find it wholesome. Lo, where comes that rock
 That I advise your shunning.

*Enter CARDINAL WOLSEY, the purse borne before him,
 certain of the Guard, and two Secretaries with papers.
 The CARDINAL in his passage fixeth his eye on
 BUCKINGHAM, and BUCKINGHAM on him, both full of
 disdain.*

Wol. The Duke of Buckingham's surveyor, ha ?
 Where's his examination ?

First Sec. Here, so please you.

Wol. Is he in person ready ?

First Sec. Ay, please your grace.

Wol. Well, we shall then know more ; and Buckingham
 Shall lessen this big look. [*Exeunt Wolsey and his Train.*]

Buck. This butcher's cur is venom-mouth'd, and I
 Have not the power to muzzle him ; therefore best
 Not wake him in his slumber. A beggar's book
 Outworths a noble's blood.

Nor. What, are you chafed ?
 Ask God for temperance ; that's the appliance only
 Which your disease requires.

Buck. I read in 's looks
 Matter against me ; and his eye reviled
 Me, as his abject object : at this instant
 He bores me with some trick : he's gone to the king ;
 I'll follow and outstare him.

Nor. Stay, my lord,
 And let your reason with your choler question
 What 'tis you go about : to climb steep hills
 Requires slow pace at first : anger is like
 A full-hot horse, who being allow'd his way,

Self-mettle tires him. Not a man in England
Can advise me like you ; be to yourself
As you would to your friend.

Buck. I'll to the king ;
And from a mouth of honour quite cry down
This Ipswich fellow's insolence ; or proclaim
There's difference in no persons.

Nor. Be advised ;
Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot
That it do singe yourself : we may outrun,
By violent swiftness, that which we run at,
And lose by over-running. Know you not,
The fire that mounts the liquor till 't run o'er,
In seeming to augment it, wastes it ? Be advised :
I say again, there is no English soul
More stronger to direct you than yourself,
If with the sap of reason you would quench,
Or but allay, the fire of passion.

Buck. Sir,
I am thankful to you ; and I'll go along
By your prescription : but this top-proud fellow,
Whom from the flow of gall I name not, but
From sincere motions, by intelligence,
And proofs as clear as fountains in July, when
We see each grain of gravel, I do know
To be corrupt and treasonous.

Nor. Say not ' treasonous.'

Buck. To the king I'll say't ; and make my vouch as
strong
As shore of rock. Attend. This holy fox,
Or wolf, or both—for he is equal ravenous
As he is subtle, and as prone to mischief
As able to perform 't ; his mind and place
Infecting one another, yea, reciprocally—
Only to show his pomp as well in France
As here at home, suggests the king our master
To this last costly treaty, the interview,
That swallow'd so much treasure, and like a glass
Did break i' the rinsing.

Nor. Faith, and so it did.

Buck. Pray, give me favour, sir. This cunning cardinal
The articles o' the combination drew
As himself pleased ; and they were ratified
As he cried ' Thus let be ' : to as much end
As give a crutch to the dead : but our count-cardinal
Has done this, and 'tis well ; for worthy Wolsey,
Who cannot err, he did it. Now this follows,—
Which, as I take it, is a kind of puppy

To the old dam, treason,—Charles, the emperor,
 Under pretence to see the queen his aunt,—
 For 'twas indeed his colour, but he came
 To whisper Wolsey,—here makes visitation :
 His fears were, that the interview betwixt
 England and France might, through their amity,
 Breed him some prejudice : for from this league
 Peep'd harms that menaced him : he privily
 Deals with our cardinal ; and, as I trow,—
 Which I do well, for I am sure the emperor
 Paid ere he promised ; whereby his suit was granted
 Ere it was ask'd—but when the way was made,
 And paved with gold, the emperor thus desired,
 That he would please to alter the king's course,
 And break the foresaid peace. Let the king know,
 As soon he shall by me, that thus the cardinal
 Does buy and sell his honour as he pleases,
 And for his own advantage.

Nor. I am sorry
 To hear this of him ; and could wish he were
 Something mistaken in 't.

Buck. No, not a syllable :
 I do pronounce him in that very shape,
 He shall appear in proof.

*Enter BRANDON, a Sergeant-at-arms, before him,
 and two or three of the Guard.*

Bran. Your office, sergeant ; execute it.

Serg. Sir,
 My lord the Duke of Buckingham, and Earl
 Of Hereford, Stafford, and Northampton, I
 Arrest thee of high treason, in the name
 Of our most sovereign king.

Buck. Lo you, my lord,
 The net has fall'n upon me ! I shall perish
 Under device and practice.

Bran. I am sorry
 To see you ta'en from liberty, to look on
 The business present : 'tis his highness' pleasure
 You shall to the Tower.

Buck. It will help me nothing
 To plead mine innocence ; for that dye is on me
 Which makes my whitest part black. The will of heaven
 Be done in this and all things ! I obey.
 O my Lord Abergavenny, fare you well !

Bran. Nay, he must bear you company. The king
 [To Abergavenny.
 Is pleased you shall to the Tower, till you know
 How he determines further.

Aber. As the duke said,
 The will of heaven be done, and the king's pleasure
 By me obey'd!

Bran. Here is a warrant from
 The king to attach Lord Montacute; and the bodies
 Of the duke's confessor, John de la Car,
 One Gilbert Peck, his chancellor,—

Buck. So, so;
 These are the limbs o' the plot: no more, I hope.

Bran. A monk o' the Chartreux.

Buck. O, Nicholas Hopkins?

Bran. He.

Buck. My surveyor is false; the o'er-great cardinal
 Hath showed him gold; my life is spann'd already:
 I am the shadow of poor Buckingham,
 Whose figure even this instant cloud puts on,
 By darkening my clear sun. My lord, farewell. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. The same. The council chamber.

Cornets. Enter the KING, leaning on the CARDINAL'S
 shoulder, the Nobles, and Sir THOMAS LOVELL; the
 CARDINAL places himself under the KING'S feet on his
 right side.

King. My life itself, and the best heart of it,
 Thanks you for this great care: I stood i' the level
 Of a full-charged confederacy, and give thanks
 To you that choked it. Let be call'd before us
 That gentleman of Buckingham's; in person
 I'll hear him his confessions justify;
 And point by point the treasons of his master
 He shall again relate.

A noise within, crying 'Room for the Queen!' Enter
 QUEEN KATHARINE, ushered by the DUKE OF NOR-

FOLK *and the DUKE OF SUFFOLK: she kneels. The KING riseth from his state, takes her up, kisses, and placeth her by him.*

Q. Kath. Nay, we must longer kneel : I am a suitor.

King. Arise, and take place by us : half your suit
Never name to us ; you have half our power :
The other moiety, ere you ask, is given ;
Repeat your will and take it.

Q. Kath. Thank your majesty.
That you would love yourself, and in that love
Not unconsider'd leave your honour, nor
The dignity of your office, is the point
Of my petition.

King. Lady mine, proceed.

Q. Kath. I am solicited, not by a few,
And those of true condition, that your subjects
Are in great grievance : there have been commissions
Sent down among 'em, which hath flaw'd the heart
Of all their loyalties : wherein, although,
My good lord cardinal, they vent reproaches
Most bitterly on you, as putter on
Of these exactions, yet the king our master—
Whose honour heaven shield from soil !—even he escapes not
Language unmannerly, yea, such which breaks
The sides of loyalty, and almost appears
In loud rebellion.

Nor. Not almost appears,
It doth appear : for, upon these taxations,
The clothiers all, not able to maintain
The many to them longing, have put off
The spinsters, carders, fullers, weavers, who,
Unfit for other life, compell'd by hunger
And lack of other means, in desperate manner
Daring the event to the teeth, are all in uproar,
And danger serves among them.

King. Taxation !
Wherein ? and what taxation ? My lord cardinal,
You that are blamed for it alike with us,
Know you of this taxation ?

Wol. Please you, sir,
I know but of a single part, in aught
Pertains to the state ; and front but in that file
Where others tell steps with me.

Q. Kath. No, my lord,
You know no more than others ; but you frame
Things that are known alike ; which are not wholesome

To those which would not know them, and yet must
 Perforce be their acquaintance. These exactions,
 Whereof my sovereign would have note, they are
 Most pestilent to the hearing ; and, to bear 'em,
 The back is sacrifice to the load. They say
 They are devised by you ; or else you suffer
 Too hard an exclamation.

King. Still exaction !
 The nature of it ? in what kind, let's know,
 Is this exaction ?

Q. Kath. I am much too venturous
 In tempting of your patience ; but am bolden'd
 Under your promised pardon. The subjects' grief
 Comes through commissions, which compel from each
 The sixth part of his substance, to be levied
 Without delay ; and the pretence for this
 Is named, your wars in France : this makes bold mouths :
 Tongues spit their duties out, and cold hearts freeze
 Allegiance in them ; their curses now
 Live where their prayers did : and it's come to pass,
 This tractable obedience is a slave
 To each incensed will. I would your highness
 Would give it quick consideration, for
 There is no primer business.

King. By my life,
 This is against our pleasure.

Wol. And for me,
 I have no further gone in this than by
 A single voice ; and that not passed me, but
 By learned approbation of the judges. If I am
 Traduced by ignorant tongues, which neither know
 My faculties nor person, yet will be
 The chronicles of my doing, let me say
 'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake
 That virtue must go through. We must not stint
 Our necessary actions, in the fear
 To cope malicious censurers ; which ever,
 As ravenous fishes, do a vessel follow
 That is new-trimm'd, but benefit no further
 Than vainly longing. What we oft do best,
 By sick interpreters, once weak ones, is
 Not ours, or not allow'd ; what worst, as oft,
 Hitting a grosser quality, is cried up
 For our best act. If we shall stand still,
 In fear our motion will be mock'd or carp'd at,
 We should take root here where we sit, or sit
 State-statues only.

King. Things done well,
 And with a care, exempt themselves from fear ;

Things done without example, in their issue
 Are to be fear'd. Have you a precedent
 Of this commission? I believe, not any.
 We must not rend our subjects from our laws,
 And stick them in our will. Sixth part of each?
 A trembling contribution! Why, we take
 From every tree, lop, bark, and part o' the timber;
 And, though we leave it with a root, thus hack'd,
 The air will drink the sap. To every county
 Where this is question'd send our letters, with
 Free pardon to each man that has denied
 The force of this commission: pray, look to 't:
 I put it to your care.

Vol. A word with you. [To the Secretary.
 Let there be letters writ to every shire,
 Of the king's grace and pardon. The griev'd commons
 Hardly conceive of me; let it be noised
 That through our intercession this revokement
 And pardon comes: I shall anon advise you
 Further in the proceeding. [Exit Secretary.

Enter Surveyor.

Q. Kath. I am sorry that the Duke of Buckingham
 Is run in your displeasure.

King. It grieves many:
 The gentleman is learn'd, and a most rare speaker;
 To nature none more bound; his training such,
 That he may furnish and instruct great teachers,
 And never seek for aid out of himself. Yet see,
 When these so noble benefits shall prove
 Not well disposed, the mind growing once corrupt,
 They turn to vicious forms, ten times more ugly
 Than ever they were fair. This man so complete,
 Who was enroll'd 'mongst wonders, and when we,
 Almost with ravish'd listening, could not find
 His hour of speech a minute; he, my lady,
 Hath into monstrous habits put the graces
 That once were his, and is become as black
 As if besmear'd in hell. Sit by us; you shall hear—
 This was his gentleman in trust—of him,
 Things to strike honour sad. Bid him recount
 The fore-recited practices; whereof
 We cannot feel too little, hear too much.

Vol. Stand forth, and with bold spirit relate what you,
 Most like a careful subject, have collected
 Out of the Duke of Buckingham.

King. speak freely.

Surv. First, it was usual with him, every day
It would infect his speech, that if the king
Should without issue die, he'll carry it so
To make the sceptre his: these very words
I've heard him utter to his son-in-law,
Lord Abergavenny; to whom by oath he menaced
Revenge upon the cardinal.

Wol. Please your highness, note
This dangerous conception in this point.
Not friended by his wish to your high person
His will is most malignant; and it stretches
Beyond you, to your friends.

Q. Kath. My learn'd lord cardinal,
Deliver all with charity.

King. Speak on:
How grounded he his title to the crown,
Upon our fail? to this point hast thou heard him
At any-time speak aught?

Surv. He was brought to this
By a vain prophecy of Nicholas Hopkins.

King. What was that Hopkins?

Surv. A Chartreux friar,
His confessor; who fed him every minute
With words of sovereignty.

King. How know'st thou this?

Surv. Not long before your highness sped to France,
The duke being at the Rose, within the parish
Saint Lawrence Poultney, did of me demand
What was the speech among the Londoners
Concerning the French journey: I replied,
Men fear'd the French would prove perfidious,
To the king's danger. Presently the duke
Said, 'twas the fear, indeed; and that he doubted
'Twould prove the verity of certain words
Spoke by a holy monk; 'that oft,' says he,
'Hath sent to me, wishing me to permit
John de la Car, my chaplain, a choice hour
To hear from him a matter of some moment:
Whom after under the confession's seal
He solemnly had sworn, that what he spoke
My chaplain to no creature living, but
To me, should utter, with demure confidence
This pausingly ensued: Neither the king nor 's heirs,
Tell you the duke, shall prosper: bid him strive
To gain the love o' the commonalty; the duke
Shall govern England.'

Q. Kath. If I know you well,
 You were the duke's surveyor, and lost your office
 On the complaint o' the tenants: take good heed
 You charge not in your spleen a noble person,
 And spoil your nobler soul: I say, take heed;
 Yes, heartily beseech you.

King. Let him on.
 Go forward.

Surv. On my soul, I'll speak but truth.
 I told my lord the duke, by the devil's illusions
 The monk might be deceived; and that 'twas dangerous for him
 To ruminate on this so far, until
 It forged him some design, which, being believed,
 It was much like to do: he answer'd, 'Tush,
 It can do me no damage'; adding further,
 That, had the king in his last sickness fail'd,
 The cardinal's and Sir Thomas Lovell's heads
 Should have gone off.

King. Ha! what, so rank? Ah ha!
 There's mischief in this man: canst thou say further?

Surv. I can, my liege.

King. Proceed.

Surv. Being at Greenwich,
 After your highness had reproved the duke
 About Sir William Bulmer,—

King. I remember
 Of such a time: being my sworn servant,
 The duke retain'd him his. But on; what hence?

Surv. 'If,' quoth he, 'I for this had been committed,
 As, to the Tower, I thought, I would have play'd
 The part my father meant to act upon
 The usurper Richard; who, being at Salisbury,
 Made suit to come in 's presence; which if granted,
 As he made semblance of his duty, would
 Have put his knife into him.'

King. A giant traitor!

Wol. Now, madam, may his highness live in freedom,
 And this man out of prison?

Q. Kath. God mend all!

King. There's something more would out of thee; what
 say'st?

Surv. After 'the duke his father,' with 'the knife,'
 He stretched him, and, with one hand on his dagger,
 Another spread on 's breast, mounting his eyes,
 He did discharge a horrible oath; whose tenour
 Was,—were he evil used, he would outgo

His father by as much as a performance
Does an irresolute purpose.

King. There's his period,
To sheath his knife in us. He is attach'd;
Call him to present trial: if he may
Find mercy in the law, 'tis his; if none,
Let him not seek 't of us: by day and night,
He's traitor to the height.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. An ante-chamber in the palace.

Enter the LORD CHAMBERLAIN and LORD SANDS.

Cham. Is 't possible the spells of France should juggle
Men into such strange mysteries?

Sands. New customs,
Though they be never so ridiculous,
Nay, let 'em be unmanly, yet are follow'd.

Cham. As far as I see, all the good our English
Have got by the late voyage is but merely
A fit or two o' the face; but they are shrewd ones;
For when they hold 'em, you would swear directly
Their very noses had been counsellors
To Pepin or Clotharius, they keep state so.

Sands. They have all new legs, and lame ones: one
would take it,
That never saw 'em pace before, the spavin
Or springhalt reigned among 'em.

Cham. Death! my lord,
Their clothes are after such a pagan cut too,
That, sure, they've worn out Christendom.

Enter SIR THOMAS LOVELL.

What news, Sir Thomas Lovell?

How now,

Lov. Faith, my lord,
I hear of none, but the new proclamation
That's clapp'd upon the court gate.

Cham. What is 't for?

Lov. The reformation of our travell'd gallants,
That fill the court with quarrels, talk, and tailors.

Cham. I'm glad 'tis there: now I would pray our
monsieurs
To think an English courtier may be wise
And never see the Louvre.

Lov. They must either,
 For so run the conditions, leave those remnants
 Of fool and feather that they got in France,
 With all their honourable points of ignorance
 Pertaining thereunto, as fights and fireworks,
 Abusing better men than they can be,
 Out of a foreign wisdom, renouncing clean
 The faith they have in tennis, and tall stockings,
 Short blister'd breeches, and those types of travel,
 And understand again like honest men ;
 Or back to their old playfellows : there, I take it,
 They may, *cum privilegio*, wear away
 The lag end of their lewdness and be laugh'd at.

Sands. 'Tis time to give 'em physic, their diseases
 Are grown so catching.

Cham. What a loss our ladies
 Will have of these trim vanities !

Lov. Ay, marry,
 A French song and a fiddle has no fellow.

Sands. The devil fiddle 'em ! I am glad they are going,
 For, sure, there's no converting of 'em : now
 An honest country lord, as I am, beaten
 A long time out of play, may bring his plain-song
 And have an hour of hearing ; and, by'r lady,
 Held current music too.

Cham. Sir Thomas,
 Whither were you a-going ?

Lov. To the cardinal's :
 Your lordship is a guest too.

Cham. O, 'tis true :
 This night he makes a supper, and a great one,
 To many lords and ladies ; there will be
 The beauty of the kingdom, I'll assure you.

Lov. That churchman bears a bounteous mind indeed,
 A hand as fruitful as the land that feeds us ;
 His dews fall everywhere.

Cham. No doubt he's noble ;
 He had a black mouth that said other of him.

Sands. He may, my lord ; has wherewithal : in him
 Sparing would show a worse sin than ill doctrine ;
 Men of his way should be most liberal ;
 They are set here for examples.

Cham. True, they are so ;
 But few now give so great ones. My barge stays ;
 Your lordship shall along. Come, good Sir Thomas,
 We shall be late else ; which I would not be,

For I was spoke to, with Sir Henry Guildford
This night to be comptrollers.

Sands.

I am your lordship's.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. A Hall in York Place.

Hautboys. A small table under a state for the CARDINAL,
a longer table for the guests. Then enter ANNE
BULLEN and divers other Ladies and Gentlemen as
Guests, at one door; at another door, enter SIR HENRY
GUILDFORD.

Guild. Ladies, a general welcome from his grace
Salutes ye all; this night he dedicates
To fair content and you: none here, he hopes,
In all this noble bevy, has brought with her
One care abroad; he would have all as merry
As, first, good company, good wine, good welcome,
Can make good people. O, my lord, you're tardy:

Enter LORD CHAMBERLAIN, LORD SANDS, and
SIR THOMAS LOVELL.

The very thought of this fair company
Clapp'd wings to me.

Cham. You are young, Sir Harry Guildford.

Sands. Sir Thomas Lovell, had the cardinal
But half my lay thoughts in him, some of these
Should find a running banquet ere they'rested,
I think would better please 'em: by my life,
They are a sweet society of fair ones.

Lov. O, that your lordship were but now confessor
To one or two of these!

Sands. I would I were;
They should find easy penance.

Cham. Sweet ladies, will it please you sit? Sir Harry,
Place you that side; I'll take the charge of this:
His grace is entering. Nay, you must not freeze;
Two women placed together makes cold weather:
My Lord Sands, you are one will keep 'em waking;
Pray, sit between the ladies.

Sands. By my faith,
And thank your lordship. By your leave, sweet ladies :
If I chance to talk a little wild, forgive me ;
I had it from my father.

Anne. Was he mad, sir ?

Sands. O, very mad, exceeding mad, in love too :
But he would bite none ; just as I do now,
He would kiss you twenty with a breath. [*Kisses her.*]

Cham. Well said, my lord.
So, now you're fairly seated. Gentlemen,
The penance lies on you, if these fair ladies
Pass away frowning.

Sands. For my little cure,
Let me alone.

Hautboys. Enter CARDINAL WOLSEY, and takes his state.

Wol. You're welcome, my fair guests : that noble lady,
Or gentleman, that is not freely merry,
Is not my friend : this, to confirm my welcome ;
And to you all good health. [*Drinks.*]

Sands. Your grace is noble :
Let me have such a bowl may hold my thanks,
And save me so much talking.

Wol. My Lord Sands,
I am beholding to you : cheer your neighbours.
Ladies, you are not merry : gentlemen,
Whose fault is this ?

Sands. The red wine first must rise
In their fair cheeks, my lord ; then we shall have 'em
Talk us to silence.

Anne. You are a merry gamester,
My Lord Sands.

Sands. Yes, if I make my play.
Here's to your ladyship : and pledge it, madam,
For 'tis to such a thing,—

Anne. You cannot show me.

Sands. I told your grace they would talk anon.

[*Drum and trumpet, chambers discharged.*]

Wol. What's that ?

Cham. Look out there, some of ye. [*Exit Servant.*]

Wol. What warlike voice,
And to what end, is this ? Nay, ladies, fear not ;
By all the laws of war you're privileged.

Re-enter Servant.

Cham. How now! what is't?

Serv. A noble troop of strangers;
For so they seem: they've left their barge and landed;
And hither make as great ambassadors
From foreign princes.

Wol. Good lord chamberlain,
Go, give 'em welcome; you can speak the French tongue;
And, pray, receive 'em nobly, and conduct 'em
Into our presence, where this heaven of beauty
Shall shine at full upon them. Some attend him.

[Exit Chamberlain, attended. All rise, and tables removed.]

You have now a broken banquet; but we'll mend it.
A good digestion to you all: and once more
I shower a welcome on ye; welcome all.

[Hautboys. Enter the KING and others, as masquers, habited like shepherds, ushered by the LORD CHAMBERLAIN. They pass directly before the CARDINAL, and gracefully salute him.]

A noble company! what are their pleasures?

Cham. Because they speak no English, thus they pray'd
To tell your grace, that, having heard by fame
Of this so noble and so fair assembly
This night to meet here, they could do no less,
Out of the great respect they bear to beauty,
But leave their flocks; and, under your fair conduct,
Crave leave to view these ladies and entreat
An hour of revels with 'em.

Wol. Say, lord chamberlain,
They have done my poor house grace; for which I pay 'em
A thousand thanks, and pray 'em take their pleasures.

[They choose ladies for the dance. The king chooses Anne Bullen.]

King. The fairest hand I ever touch'd! O beauty,
Till now I never knew thee! *[Music. Dance.]*

Wol. My lord!

Cham. Your grace?

Wol. Pray, tell 'em thus much from me:
There should be one amongst 'em, by his person,
More worthy this place than myself; to whom,

If I but knew him, with my love and duty
I would surrender it.

Cham.

I will, my lord.

[*Whispers the Masquers.*

Wol. What say they?

Cham. Such a one, they all confess,
There is indeed; which they would have your grace
Find out, and he will take it.

Wol. Let me see, then.
By all your good leaves, gentlemen; here I'll make
My royal choice.

King.

Ye have found him, cardinal:

[*Unmasking.*

You hold a fair assembly; you do well, lord:
You are a churchman, or, I'll tell you, cardinal,
I should judge now unhappily.

Wol.

I am glad

Your grace is grown so pleasant.

King.

My lord chamberlain,
Prithee, come hither: what fair lady's that?

Cham. An't please your grace, Sir Thomas Bullen's
daughter,—
The Viscount Rochford,—one of her highness' women.

King. By heaven, she is a dainty one. Sweetheart,
I were unmannerly, to take you out,
And not to kiss you. A health, gentlemen!
Let it go round.

Wol. Sir Thomas Lovell, is the banquet ready
I' the privy chamber?

Lov.

Yes, my lord.

Wol.

Your grace,
I fear, with dancing is a little heated.

King. I fear, too much.

Wol.

There's fresher air, my lord,
In the next chamber.

King. Lead in your ladies, every one: sweet partner,
I must not yet forsake you: let's be merry,
Good my lord cardinal: I have half a dozen healths
To drink to these fair ladies, and a measure
To lead 'em once again; and then let's dream
Who's best in favour. Let the music knock it.

[*Exeunt with trumpets.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. Westminster. A street.

Enter two Gentlemen, meeting.

First Gent. Whither away so fast ?

Sec. Gent. O, God save ye !

Even to the hall, to hear what shall become
Of the great Duke of Buckingham.

First Gent. I'll save you
That labour, sir. All's now done, but the ceremony
Of bringing back the prisoner.

Sec. Gent. Were you there ?

First Gent. Yes, indeed, was I.

Sec. Gent. Pray, speak what has happen'd.

First Gent. You may guess quickly what.

Sec. Gent. Is he found guilty ?

First Gent. Yes, truly is he, and condemn'd upon 't.

Sec. Gent. I am sorry for 't.

First Gent. So are a number more.

Sec. Gent. But, pray, how pass'd it ?

First Gent. I'll tell you in a little. The great duke
Came to the bar ; where to his accusations
He pleaded still not guilty, and alleged
Many sharp reasons to defeat the law.
The king's attorney on the contrary
Urged on the examinations, proofs, confessions
Of divers witnesses ; which the duke desired
To have brought *vivâ voce* to his face :
At which appear'd against him his surveyor ;
Sir Gilbert Peck his chancellor ; and John Car,
Confessor to him ; with that devil-monk,
Hopkins, that made this mischief.

Sec. Gent. That was he
That fed him with his prophecies ?

First Gent. The same.
All these accused him strongly ; which he fain
Would have flung from him, but, indeed, he could not :
And so his peers, upon this evidence,
Have found him guilty of high treason. Much
He spoke, and learnedly, for life ; but all
Was either pitied in him or forgotten.

Sec. Gent. After all this, how did he bear himself ?

First Gent. When he was brought again to the bar
to hear
His knell rung out, his judgment, he was stirr'd
With such an agony, he sweat extremely,
And something spoke in choler, ill, and hasty :
But he fell to himself again, and sweetly
In all the rest show'd a most noble patience.

Sec. Gent. I do not think he fears death.

First Gent. Sure, he does not ;
He never was so womanish ; the cause
He may a little grieve at.

Sec. Gent. Certainly
The cardinal is the end of this.

First Gent. 'Tis likely,
By all conjectures : first, Kildare's attainer,
Then deputy of Ireland ; who removed,
Earl Surrey was sent thither, and in haste too,
Lest he should help his father.

Sec. Gen. That trick of state
Was a deep envious one.

First Gent. At his return
No doubt he will requite it. This is noted,
And generally, whoever the king favours,
The cardinal instantly will find employment,
And far enough from court too.

Sec. Gent. All the commons
Hate him perniciously, and, o' my conscience,
Wish him ten fathom deep ; this duke as much
They love and dote on ; call him bounteous Buckingham,
The mirror of all courtesy.

First Gent. Stay there, sir,
And see the noble ruin'd man you speak of.

*Enter BUCKINGHAM from his arraignment ; tip-staves
before him ; the axe with the edge towards him ;
halberds on each side : accompanied with SIR THOMAS
LOVELL, SIR NICHOLAS VAUX, SIR WILLIAM
SANDS, and common people.*

Sec. Gent. Let's stand close, and behold him.

Buck. All good people,
You that thus far have come to pity me,
Hear what I say, and then go home and lose me.
I have this day received a traitor's judgment,
And by that name must die : yet, heaven bear witness,
And if I have a conscience, let it sink me,

Even as the axe falls, if I be not faithful !
 The law I bear no malice for my death ;
 'T has done, upon the premises, but justice :
 But those that sought it I could wish more christians :
 Be what they will, I heartily forgive 'em.
 Yet let 'em look they glory not in mischief,
 Nor build their evils on the graves of great men ;
 For then my guiltless blood must cry against 'em.
 For further life in this world I ne'er hope,
 Nor will I sue, although the king have mercies
 More than I dare make faults. You few that loved me,
 And dare be bold to weep for Buckingham,
 His noble friends and fellows, whom to leave
 Is only bitter to him, only dying,
 Go with me, like good angels, to my end ;
 And as the long divorce of steel falls on me,
 Make of your prayers one sweet sacrifice,
 And lift my soul to heaven. Lead on, o' God's name.

Lov. I do beseech your grace, for charity,
 If ever any malice in your heart
 Were hid against me, now to forgive me frankly.

Buck. Sir Thomas Lovell, I as free forgive you
 As I would be forgiven : I forgive all ;
 There cannot be those numberless offences
 'Gainst me, that I cannot take peace with : no black envy
 Shall mark my grave. Commend me to his grace ;
 And, if he speak of Buckingham, pray, tell him
 You met him half in heaven : my vows and prayers
 Yet are the king's ; and, till my soul forsake,
 Shall cry for blessings on him : may he live
 Longer than I have time to tell his years !
 Ever beloved and loving may his rule be !
 And when old time shall lead him to his end,
 Goodness and he fill up one monument !

Lov. To the water side I must conduct your grace ;
 Then give my charge up to Sir Nicholas Vaux,
 Who undertakes you to your end.

Vaux. Prepare there,
 The duke is coming : see the barge be ready ;
 And fit it with such furniture as suits
 The greatness of his person.

Buck. Nay, Sir Nicholas,
 Let it alone ; my state now will but mock me.
 When I came hither, I was lord high constable
 And Duke of Buckingham ; now, poor Edward Bohun :
 Yet I am richer than my base accusers,
 That never knew what truth meant : I now seal it ;
 And with that blood will make 'em one day groan for 't ;

My noble father, Henry of Buckingham,
 Who first raised head against usurping Richard,
 Flying for succour to his servant Banister,
 Being distress'd, was by that wretch betray'd,
 And without trial fell; God's peace be with him!
 Henry the Seventh succeeding, truly pitying
 My father's loss, like a most royal prince,
 Restored me to my honours, and out of ruins,
 Made my name once more noble. Now his son,
 Henry the Eighth, life, honour, name, and all
 That made me happy, at one stroke has taken
 For ever from the world. I had my trial,
 And, must needs say, a noble one; which makes me
 A little happier than my wretched father:
 Yet thus far we are one in fortunes: both
 Fell by our servants, by those men we loved most,
 A most unnatural and faithless service!
 Heaven has an end in all: yet, you that hear me,
 This from a dying man receive as certain:
 Where you are liberal of your loves and counsels
 Be sure you be not loose; for those you make friends
 And give your hearts to, when they once perceive
 The least rub in your fortunes, fall away
 Like water from ye, never found again
 But where they mean to sink ye. All good people,
 Pray for me! I must now forsake ye: the last hour
 Of my long weary life is come upon me.
 Farewell:
 And when you would say something that is sad,
 Speak how I fell. I have done; and God forgive me!

[*Exeunt Duke and Train.*]

First Gent. O, this is full of pity! Sir, it calls,
 I fear, too many curses on their heads
 That were the authors.

Sec. Gent. If the duke be guiltless,
 'Tis full of woe: yet I can give you inkling
 Of an ensuing evil, if it fall,
 Greater than this.

First Gent. Good angels keep it from us!
 What may it be? You do not doubt my faith, sir?

Sec. Gent. This secret is so weighty, 'twill require
 A strong faith to conceal it.

First Gent. Let me have it;
 I do not talk much.

Sec. Gent. I am confident;
 You shall, sir: did you not of late days hear

A buzzing of a separation
Between the king and Katharine?

First Gent. Yes, but it held not :
For when the king once heard it, out of anger
He sent command to the lord mayor straight
To stop the rumour, and allay those tongues
That durst disperse it.

Sec. Gent. But that slander, sir,
Is found a truth now : for it grows again
Fresher than e'er it was ; and held for certain
The king will venture at it. Either the cardinal,
Or some about him near, have, out of malice
To the good queen, possess'd him with a scruple
That will undo her : to confirm this too,
Cardinal Campeius is arrived, and lately ;
As all think, for this business.

First Gent. 'Tis the cardinal ;
And merely to revenge him on the emperor
For not bestowing on him, at his asking,
The archbishopric of Toledo, this is purposed.

Sec. Gent. I think you have hit the mark : but is 't not
cruel
That she should feel the smart of this ? The cardinal
Will have his will, and she must fall.

First Gent. 'Tis woful.
We are too open here to argue this ;
Let's think in private more.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. An ante-chamber in the palace.

Enter the LORD CHAMBERLAIN, reading a letter.

Cham. "My lord, the horses your lordship sent for, with all the care I had, I saw well chosen, ridden, and furnished. They were young and handsome, and of the best breed in the north. When they were ready to set out for London, a man of my lord cardinal's, by commission and main power, took 'em from me ; with this reason : His master would be served before a subject, if not before the king ; which stopped our mouths, sir."
I fear he will indeed : well, let him have them :
He will have all, I think.

*Enter, to the LORD CHAMBERLAIN, the DUKES OF
NORFOLK and SUFFOLK.*

Nor. Well met, my lord chamberlain.

Cham. Good day to both your graces.

Suf. How is the king employ'd?

Cham. I left him private,
Full of sad thoughts and troubles.

Nor. What's the cause?

Cham. It seems the marriage with his brother's wife
Has crept too near his conscience.

Suf. No, his conscience
Has crept too near another lady.

Nor. 'Tis so:
This is the cardinal's doing, the king-cardinal:
That blind priest, like the eldest son of fortune,
Turns what he list. The king will know him one day.

Suf. Pray God he do! he'll never know himself else.

Nor. How holily he works in all his business!
And with what zeal! for, now he has crack'd the league
Between us and the emperor, the queen's great nephew,
He dives into the king's soul, and there scatters
Dangers, doubts, wringing of the conscience,
Fears, and despairs; and all these for his marriage;
And out of all these to restore the king,
He counsels a divorce; a loss of her
That, like a jewel, has hung twenty years
About his neck, yet never lost her lustre;
Of her that loves him with that excellence
That angels love good men with; even of her
That, when the greatest stroke of fortune falls,
Will bless the king: and is not this course pious?

Cham. Heaven keep me from such counsel! 'Tis most
true

These news are everywhere; every tongue speaks 'em,
And every true heart weeps for 't: all that dare
Look into these affairs see this main end,
The French king's sister. Heaven will one day open
The king's eyes, that so long have slept upon
This bold bad man.

Suf. And free us from his slavery.

Nor. We had need pray,
And heartily, for our deliverance;
Or this imperious man will work us all
From princes into pages: all men's honours
Lie like one lump before him, to be fashion'd
Into what pitch he please.

Suf. For me, my lords,
I love him not, nor fear him; there's my creed:

As I am made without him, so I'll stand,
 If the king please; his curses and his blessings
 Touch me alike, they're breath I not believe in.
 I knew him, and I know him; so I leave him
 To him that made him proud, the pope.

Nor. Let's in;
 And with some other business put the king
 From these sad thoughts, that work too much upon him:
 My lord, you'll bear us company.

Cham. Excuse me;
 The king has sent me elsewhere: besides,
 You'll find a most unfit time to disturb him:
 Health to your lordships.

Nor. Thanks, my good lord chamberlain.

[Exit Lord Chamberlain; and the King draws the curtain, and sits reading pensively.]

Suf. How sad he looks! sure, he is much afflicted.

King. Who's there, ha?

Nor. Pray God he be not angry.

King. Who's there, I say? How dare you thrust your-
 selves

Into my private meditations?

Who am I? ha?

Nor. A gracious king that pardons all offences
 Malice ne'er meant: our breach of duty this way
 Is business of estate; in which we come
 To know your royal pleasure.

King. Ye are too bold:
 Go to; I'll make ye know your times of business:
 Is this an hour for temporal affairs, ha?

Enter WOLSEY and CAMPEIUS, with a commission.

Who's there? my good lord cardinal? O my Wolsey,
 The quiet of my wounded conscience;
 Thou art a cure fit for a king. *[To Camp.]* You're welcome,
 Most learned reverend sir, into our kingdom:
 Use us and it. *[To Wol.]* My good lord, have great care
 I be not found a talker.

Wol. Sir, you cannot.
 I would your grace would give us but an hour
 Of private conference.

King. *[To Nor. and Suf.]* We are busy; go.

Nor. *[Aside to Suf.]* This priest has no pride in him.

Suf. [*Aside to Nor.*] Not to speak of:
I would not be so sick though, for his place:
But this cannot continue.

Nor. [*Aside to Suf.*] If it do,
I'll venture one have-at-him.

Suf. [*Aside to Nor.*] I another.

[*Exeunt Norfolk and Suffolk.*]

Wol. Your grace has given a precedent of wisdom
Above all princes, in committing freely
Your scruple to the voice of Christendom:
Who can be angry now? what envy reach you?
The Spaniard, tied by blood and favour to her,
Must now confess, if they have any goodness,
The trial just and noble. All the clerks,
I mean the learned ones, in Christian kingdoms
Have their free voices: Rome, the nurse of judgment,
Invited by your noble self, hath sent
One general tongue unto us, this good man,
This just and learned priest, Cardinal Campeius;
Whom once more I present unto your highness.

King. And once more in mine arms I bid him welcome,
And thank the holy conclave for their loves:
They have sent me such a man I would have wish'd for.

Cam. Your grace must needs deserve all strangers' loves,
You are so noble. To your highness' hand
I tender my commission; by whose virtue,
The court of Rome commanding, you, my lord
Cardinal of York, are join'd with me their servant
In the impartial judging of this business.

King. Two equal men. The queen shall be acquainted
Forthwith for what you come. Where's Gardiner?

Wol. I know your majesty has always loved her
So dear in heart, not to deny her that
A woman of less place might ask by law:
Scholars allow'd freely to argue for her.

King. Ay, and the best she shall have; and my favour
To him that does best: God forbid else. Cardinal,
Prithee, call Gardiner to me, my new secretary:
I find him a fit fellow. [*Exit Wolsey.*]

Re-enter WOLSEY, with GARDINER.

Wol. [*Aside to Gard.*] Give me your hand: much joy
and favour to you;
You are the king's now.

Gard. [*Aside to Wol.*] But to be commanded
For ever by your grace, whose hand has raised me.

King. Come hither, Gardiner. [*Walks and whispers.*]

Cam. My Lord of York, was not one Doctor Pace
In this man's place before him?

Wol. Yes, he was.

Cam. Was he not held a learned man?

Wol. Yes, surely.

Cam. Believe me, there's an ill opinion spread then
even of yourself, lord cardinal,

Wol. How! of me?

Cam. They will not stick to say you envied him,
And fearing he would rise, he was so virtuous,
Kept him a foreign man still; which so grieved him,
That he ran mad and died.

Wol. Heaven's peace be with him!
That's Christian care enough: for living murmurers
There's places of rebuke. He was a fool;
For he would needs be virtuous: that good fellow.
If I command him, follows my appointment:
I will have none so near else. Learn this, brother,
We live not to be griped by meaner persons.

King. Deliver this with modesty to the queen.

[*Exit Gardiner.*]

The most convenient place that I can think of
For such receipt of learning is Blackfriars;
There ye shall meet about this weighty business.
My Wolsey, see it furnish'd. O, my lord,
Would it not grieve an able man to leave
So sweet a bedfellow? But, conscience, conscience!
O, 'tis a tender place; and I must leave her. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. An ante-chamber of the Queen's apartments.

Enter ANNE BULLEN and an Old Lady.

Anne. Not for that neither: here's the pang that pinches:
His highness having lived so long with her, and she
So good a lady that no tongue could ever
Pronounce dishonour of her; by my life,
She never knew harm-doing: O, now, after
So many courses of the sun enthroned,
Still growing in a majesty and pomp, the which
To leave a thousand-fold more bitter than

'Tis sweet at first to acquire,—after this process,
To give her the avaunt ! it is a pity
Would move a monster.

Old L. Hearts of most hard temper
Melt and lament for her.

Anne. O, God's will ! much better
She ne'er had known pomp : though 't be temporal,
Yet, if that quarrel, fortune, do divorce
It from the bearer, 'tis a sufferance panging
As soul and body's severing.

Old L. Alas, poor lady !
She's a stranger now again.

Anne. So much the more
Must pity drop upon her. Verily,
I swear, 'tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief,
And wear a golden sorrow.

Old L. Our content
Is our best having.

Anne. By my troth,
I would not be a queen.

Old L. Beshrew me, I would,
And so would you,
For all this spice of your hypocrisy :
You, that have so fair parts of woman on you,
Have too a woman's heart ; which ever yet
Affected eminence, wealth, sovereignty ;
Which, to say sooth, are blessings ; and which gifts,
Saving your mincing, the capacity
Of your soft cheveril conscience would receive,
If you might please to stretch it.

Anne. Nay, good troth.

Old L. Yes, troth, and troth ; you would not be a queen ?

Anne. No, not for all the riches under heaven.

Old L. 'Tis strange : a three-pence bow'd would hire me,
Old as I am, to queen it : but, I pray you,
What think you of a duchess ? have you limbs
To bear that load of title ?

Anne. No, in truth.
I swear again, I would not be a queen
For all the world.

Old L. In faith, for little England
You 'ld venture an emballing : I myself
Would for Carnarvonshire, although there 'long'd
No more to the crown but that. Lo, who comes here ?

Enter the LORD CHAMBERLAIN.

Cham. Good morrow, ladies. What were 't worth to know
The secret of your conference?

Anne. My good lord,
Not your demand; it values not your asking:
Our mistress' sorrows we were pitying.

Cham. It was a gentle business, and becoming
The action of good women; there is hope
All will be well.

Anne. Now, I pray God, amen!

Cham. You bear a gentle mind, and heavenly blessings
Follow such creatures. That you may, fair lady,
Perceive I speak sincerely, and high note's
Ta'en of your many virtues, the king's majesty
Commends his good opinion of you, and
Does purpose honour to you no less flowing
Than Marchioness of Pembroke; to which title
A thousand pound a year, annual support,
Out of his grace he adds.

Anne. I do not know
What kind of my obedience I should tender;
More than my all is nothing: nor my prayers
Are not words duly hallowed, nor my wishes
More worth than empty vanities; yet prayers and wishes
Are all I can return. Beseech your lordship,
Vouchsafe to speak my thanks and my obedience,
As from a blushing handmaid, to his highness;
Whose health and royalty I pray for.

Cham. Lady,
I shall not fail to approve the fair conceit
The king hath of you. [*Aside*] I have perused her well:
Beauty and honour in her are so mingled
That they have caught the king: and who knows yet
But from this lady may proceed a gem
To lighten all this isle? I'll to the king,
And say I spoke with you. [*Exit Lord Chamberlain.*]

Anne. My honour'd lord.

Old L. Why this it is; see! see!
I have been begging sixteen years in court,
(Am yet a courtier beggarly) nor could
Come pat betwixt too early and too late,
For any suit of pounds: and you (O fate!)
A very fresh-fish here, (fye, fye upon
This compell'd fortune!) have your mouth fill'd up,
Before you open it.

Anne. This is strange to me.

Old L. How tastes it? is it bitter? forty pence, no.
There was a lady once, ('tis an old story)
That would not be a queen, that would she not,
For all the mud in Egypt:—Have you heard it?

Anne. Come, you are pleasant.

Old L. With your theme, I could
O'er mount the lark. The Marchioness of Pembroke!
A thousand pounds a year! for pure respect;
No other obligation: By my life,
That promises more thousands: Honour's train
Is longer than his foreskirt. By this time,
I know, your back will bear a duchess;—Say,
Are you not stronger than you were?

Anne. Good lady,
Make yourself mirth with your particular fancy,
And leave me out on't. 'Would I had no being,
If this salute my blood a jot; it faints me,
To think what follows.
The queen is comfortless, and we forgetful
In our long absence: Pray, do not deliver
What here you've heard, to her.

Old L. What do you think me?

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—A Hall in Blackfriars.

Trumpets, sennet, and cornets. Enter two Vergers, with short silver wands; next them, two Scribes, in the habits of Doctors; after them, the Archbishop of CANTERBURY alone; after him, the Bishops of LINCOLN, ELY, ROCHESTER, and SAINT ASAPH: next them, with some small distance, follows a Gentleman bearing the Purse, with the great Seal, and a Cardinal's Hat: then two Priests, bearing each a silver cross; then a Gentleman-Usher bareheaded, accompanied with a Sergeant-at-Arms, bearing a Silver Mace; then two Gentlemen bearing two great Silver Pillars: after them, side by side, the two Cardinals WOLSEY and CAMPEIUS. Two Noblemen with the Sword and Mace. Then enter the KING and QUEEN, and their Trains. The KING takes place under the Cloth of State; the two Cardinals sit under him as Judges. The QUEEN takes place at some distance from

the KING. The Bishops place themselves on each side the Court, in manner of a Consistory; below them, the Scribes. The Lords sit next the Bishops. The Crier and the rest of the Attendants stand in convenient order about the Stage.

Wol. Whilst our Commission from Rome is read,
Let silence be commanded.

K. Hen. What's the need?
It hath already publicly been read,
And on all sides the authority allowed;
You may then spare that time.

Wol. Be't so.—Proceed.

Scribe. Say, Henry King of England, come into the court.

Crier. Henry King of England, &c.

K. Hen. Here.

Scribe. Say, Katharine Queen of England, come into court.

Crier. Katharine Queen of England, &c.

[The QUEEN makes no answer, rises out of her chair, goes about the court, comes to the KING, and kneels at his feet; then speaks.]

Q. Kath. Sir, I desire you do me right and justice,
And to bestow your pity on me; for
I am a most poor woman, and a stranger,
Born out of your dominions; having here
No judge indifferent, nor no more assurance
Of equal friendship and proceeding. Alas, sir,
In what have I offended you? what cause
Hath my behaviour given to your displeasure,
That thus you should proceed to put me off,
And take your good grace from me? Heaven witness,
I have been to you a true and humble wife,
At all times to your will conformable;
Ever in fear to kindle your dislike,
Yea, subject to your countenance, glad, or sorry,
As I saw it inclined. When was the hour
I ever contradicted your desire,
Or made it not mine too? Or which of your friends
Have I not strove to love, although I knew
He were mine enemy? What friend of mine,
That had to him derived your anger, did I
Continue in my liking? nay, gave notice
He was from thence discharged. Sir, call to mind
That I have been your wife, in this obedience,

Upward of twenty years, and have been blest
 With many children by you. If, in the course
 And process of this time, you can report,
 And prove it too, against mine honour aught,
 My bond to wedlock, or my love and duty
 Against your sacred person, in God's name
 Turn me away; and let the foul'st contempt
 Shut door upon me, and so give me up
 To the sharpest kind of justice. Please you, sir,
 The king, your father, was reputed for
 A prince most prudent, of an excellent
 And unmatched wit and judgment: Ferdinand,
 My father, King of Spain, was reckoned one
 The wisest prince that there had reigned by many
 A year before; it is not to be questioned
 That they had gathered a wise council to them
 Of every realm, that did debate this business,
 Who deemed our marriage lawful. Wherefore I humbly
 Beseech you, sir, to spare me, till I may
 Be by my friends in Spain advised, whose counsel
 I will implore. If not, i' the name of God,
 Your pleasure be fulfilled.

Vol. You have here, lady, —
 And of your choice—these reverend fathers; men
 Of singular integrity and learning,
 Yea, the elect of the land, who are assembled
 To plead your cause. It shall be therefore bootless,
 That longer you desire the Court, as well
 For your own quiet, as to rectify
 What is unsettled in the King.

Cam. His grace
 Hath spoken well, and justly: therefore, madam,
 It's fit this Royal Session do proceed,
 And that, without delay, their arguments
 Be now produced and heard.

Q. Kath. Lord Cardinal,
 To you I speak.

Vol. Your pleasure, madam?
Q. Kath. Sir,
 I am about to weep; but, thinking that
 We are a Queen (or long have dreamed so), certain,
 The daughter of a King, my drops of tears
 I'll turn to sparks of fire.

Vol. Be patient yet.
Q. Kath. I will, when you are humble; nay, before,
 Or God will punish me. I do believe,
 Induced by potent circumstances, that
 You are mine enemy; and make my challenge,

You shall not be my judge. For it is you
 Have blown this coal betwixt my lord and me,
 Which God's dew quench.—Therefore, I say again,
 I utterly abhor, yea, from my soul,
 Refuse you for my judge, whom, yet once more,
 I hold my most malicious foe, and think not
 At all a friend to truth.

Vol. I do profess
 You speak not like yourself; who ever yet
 Have stood to charity, and displayed the effects
 Of disposition gentle, and of wisdom
 O'ertopping woman's power. Madam, you do me wrong.
 I have no spleen against you; nor injustice
 For you, or any: how far I have proceeded,
 Or how far further shall, is warranted
 By a Commission from the Consistory,
 Yea, the whole Consistory of Rome. You charge me,
 That I have blown this coal: I do deny it.
 The King is present: if it be known to him,
 That I gainsay my deed, how may he wound,
 And worthily, my falsehood; yea, as much
 As you have done my truth. But if he know
 That I am free of your report, he knows
 I am not of your wrong. Therefore in him
 It lies to cure me; and the cure is, to
 Remove these thoughts from you: the which before
 His highness shall speak in, I do beseech
 You, gracious madam, to unthink your speaking,
 And to say so no more.

Q. Kath. My lord, my lord,
 I am a simple woman, much too weak
 To oppose your cunning. You are meek, and humble-
 mouthed;
 You sign your place and calling, in full seeming,
 With meekness and humility; but your heart
 Is crammed with arrogancy, spleen, and pride.
 You have, by fortune and his highness' favours,
 Gone slightly o'er low steps, and now are mounted
 Where powers are your retainers; and your words,
 Domestic to you, serve your will, as 't please,
 Yourself pronounce their office. I must tell you,
 You tender more your person's honour than
 Your high profession spiritual: that again
 I do refuse you for my judge, and here,
 Before you all, appeal unto the Pope,
 To bring my whole cause 'fore his Holiness,
 And to be judged by him.

[She curtsies to the KING, and offers to depart.]

Cam. The Queen is obstinate,
Stubborn to justice, apt to accuse it, and
Disdainful to be tried by 't: 't is not well.
She's going away.

K. Hen. Call her again.

Crier. Katharine Queen of England, come into the court.

Griffith. Madam, you are called back.

Q. Kath. What need you note it? pray you keep your way:
When you are called, return.—Now the Lord help,
They vex me past my patience! Pray you pass on:
I will not tarry; no, nor evermore
Upon this business my appearance make
In any of their courts.

[*Exeunt QUEEN, GRIFFITH, and her other Attendants.*]

K. Hen. Go thy ways, Kate:
That man i' the world who shall report he has
A better wife, let him in naught be trusted
For speaking false in that. Thou art, alone,
If thy rare qualities, sweet gentleness,
(Thy meekness saint-like, wife-like government,
Obeying in commanding, and thy parts
Sovereign and pious else, could speak thee out)
The queen of earthly queens. She's noble born;
And like her true nobility she has
Carried herself towards me.

Wol. Most gracious sir,
In humblest manner I require your highness,
That it shall please you to declare, in hearing
Of all these ears,—for where I am robbed and bound,
There must I be unloosed, although not there
At once and fully satisfied,—whether ever I
Did broach this business to your highness, or
Laid any scruple in your way, which might
Induce you to the question on't? or ever
Have to you, but with thanks to God for such
A royal lady, spake one the least word, might
Be to the prejudice of her present state,
Or touch of her good person?

K. Hen. My Lord Cardinal,
I do excuse you; yea, upon mine honour,
I free you from 't. You are not to be taught
That you have many enemies, that know not
Why they are so, but, like to village curs,
Bark when their fellows do; by some of these
The queen is put in anger. You are excused:
But will you be more justified? you ever
Have wished the sleeping of this business; never

Desired it to be stirred ; but oft have hindered, oft,
 The passages made toward it.—On my honour,
 I speak, my good Lord Cardinal, to this point,
 And thus far clear him. Now, what moved me to't :
 I will be bold with time, and your attention :—
 * Then, mark the inducement. Thus it came ;—give heed to't.
 My conscience first received a tenderness,
 Scruple, and prick, on certain speeches utter'd
 By the Bishop of Bayonne, then French ambassador,
 Who had been hither sent on the debating
 A marriage 'twixt the Duke of Orleans and
 Our daughter Mary. I' the progress of this business,
 Ere a determinate resolution, he—
 I mean, the bishop—did require a respite,
 Wherein he might the king his lord advertise
 Whether our daughter were legitimate,
 Respecting this our marriage with the dowager,
 Sometimes our brother's wife. This respite shook
 The bosom of my conscience, enter'd me,
 Yea, with a splitting power, and made to tremble
 The region of my breast ; which forced such way,
 That many mazed considerings did throng,
 And press'd in with this caution. First, methought,
 I stood not in the smile of heaven, who had
 Commanded nature, that my lady's womb,
 If it conceived a male child by me, should
 Do no more offices of life to 't than
 The grave does to the dead, for her male issue
 Or died where they were made, or shortly after
 This world had aired them. Hence I took a thought
 This was a judgment on me, that my kingdom,
 Well worthy the best heir o' the world, should not
 Be gladdened in't by me. Then follows, that
 I weighed the danger which my realms stood in
 By this my issue's fail ; and that gave to me
 Many a groaning throe. Thus hulling in
 The wild sea of my conscience, I did steer
 Toward this remedy whereupon we are
 Now present here together ; that's to say,
 I meant to rectify my conscience,—which
 I then did feel full sick, and yet not well,—
 By all the reverend fathers of the land,
 And doctors learn'd. First, I began in private
 With you, my lord of Lincoln ; you remember
 How under my oppression I did reek,
 When I first moved you.

Lin.

Very well, my liege.

K. Hen. I have spoke long ; be pleased yourself to say
 How far you satisfied me.

Lin. So please your highness,
The question did at first so stagger me,—
Bearing a state of mighty moment in't,
And consequence of dread,—that I committed
The daring'st counsel which I had, to doubt,
And did entreat your highness to this course,
Which you are running here.

K. Hen. I then moved you,
My lord of Canterbury, and got your leave
To make this present summons.—Unsolicited
I left no reverend person in this court ;
But by particular consent proceeded,
Under your hands and seals : therefore, go on ;
For no dislike i' the world against the person
Of the good queen, but the sharp thorny points
Of my alleged reasons drive this forward.
Prove but our marriage lawful, by my life
And kingly dignity, we are contented
To wear our mortal state to come with her,
Katharine our queen, before the primest creature
That's paragonéd o' the world.

Cam. So please your highness,
The queen being absent, 't is a needful fitness
That we adjourn this court till further day :
Meanwhile must be an earnest motion
Made to the queen, to call back her appeal
She intends unto his Holiness,

[*They rise to depart.*]

K. Hen. [Aside.] I may perceive,
These Cardinals trifle with me : I abhor
This dilatory sloth, and tricks of Rome.
My learned and well-beloved servant, Cranmer,
Pr'ythee return : with thy approach, I know,
My comfort comes along.—Break up the court :
I say, set on. [*Exeunt, in manner as they entered.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Palace at Bridewell.

A Room in the QUEEN'S Apartment.

The QUEEN, and some of her Women, at Work.

Q. Kath. Take thy lute, wench : my soul grows sad with
troubles ;
Sing, and disperse 'em, if thou canst. Leave working.

SONG.

*Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain-tops that freeze,
Bow themselves, when he did sing :
To his music, plants and flowers
Ever sprung ; as sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.*

*Everything that heard him play,
Even the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads and then lay by,
In sweet music is such art ;
Killing care and grief of heart
Fall asleep, or, hearing, die.*

[Enter a GENTLEMAN.]

Q. Kath. How now ?

Gent. An't please your grace, the two great Cardinals
Wait in the presence.

Q. Kath. Would they speak with me ?

Gent. They willed me say so, madam.

Q. Kath. Pray their graces
To come near. [Exit Gentleman.] What can be their business
With me, a poor weak woman, fall'n from favour ?
I do not like their coming, now I think on't.
They should be good men ; their affairs as righteous :
But all hoods make not monks.

Enter WOLSEY and CAMPEIUS.

Wol. Peace to your highness !

Q. Kath. Your graces find me here part of a housewife :
I would be all, against the worse may happen.
What are your pleasures with me, reverend lords ?

Wol. May it please you, noble madam, to withdraw
Into your private chamber, we shall give you
The full cause of our coming.

Q. Kath. Speak it here.
There's nothing I have done yet, o' my conscience,
Deserves a corner : 'would all other women
Could speak this with as free a soul as I do !
My lords, I care not,—so much I am happy
Above a number,—if my actions
Were tried by every tongue, every eye saw them,
Envy and base opinion set against 'em,
I know my life so even. If your business

Seek me out, and that way I am wife in,
Out with it boldly : Truth loves open dealing.

*Wol. Tanta est erga te mentis integritis, regina
serenissima,—*

Q. Kath. O, good my lord, no Latin :
I am not such a truant since my coming,
As not to know the language I have lived in :
A strange tongue makes my cause more strange, suspicious ;
Pray, speak in English. Here are some will thank you,
If you speak truth, for their poor mistress' sake :
Believe me, she has had much wrong. Lord Cardinal,
The willing'st sin I ever yet committed
May be absolved in English.

Wol. Noble lady,
I am sorry my integrity should breed—
And service to his Majesty and you—
So deep suspicion where all faith was meant.
We come not by the way of accusation,
To taint that honour every good tongue blesses,
Nor to betray you any way to sorrow ;
You have too much, good lady ; but to know
How you stand minded in the weighty difference
Between the king and you, and to deliver
Like free and honest men, our just opinions,
And comforts to your cause.

Cam. Most honoured madam,
My lord of York,—out of his noble nature,
Zeal and obedience he still bore your grace,
Forgetting, like a good man, your late censure
Both of his truth and him, which was too far,—
Offers, as I do, in a sign of peace,
His service and his counsel.

Q. Kath. [Aside] To betray me.—
My lords, I thank you both for your good wills,
Ye speak like honest men,—pray God, ye prove so !
But how to make ye suddenly an answer,
In such a point of weight, so near mine honour,—
More near my life, I fear,—with my weak wit,
And to such men of gravity and learning,
In truth, I know not. I was set at work
Among my maids ; full little, God knows, looking
Either for such men, or such business.
For her sake that I have been, for I feel
The last fit of my greatness, good your graces,
Let me have time and counsel for my cause.
Alas, I am a woman, friendless, hopeless.

Wol. Madam, you wrong the king's love with these fears :
Your hopes and friends are infinite.

Q. Kath. In England
But little for my profit. Can you think, lords,
That any Englishman dare give me counsel?
Or be a known friend, 'gainst his highness' pleasure,—
Though he be grown so desperate to be honest,—
And live a subject? Nay, forsooth; my friends,
They that must weigh out my afflictions,
They that my trust must grow to, live not here:
They are, as all my other comforts, far hence,
In mine own country, lords.

Cam. I would, your grace
Would leave your griefs, and take my counsel.

Q. Kath. How, sir?

Cam. Put your main cause into the king's protection;
He's loving, and most gracious; 't will be much
Both for your honour better, and your cause:
For if the trial of the law o'ertake ye,
You'll part away disgraced.

Wol. He tells you rightly.

Q. Kath. Ye tell me what ye wish for both,—my ruin.
Is this your Christian counsel? out upon ye!
Heaven is above all yet; there sits a Judge
That no king can corrupt.

Cam. Your rage mistakes us.

Q. Kath. The more shame for ye! holy men I thought ye,
Upon my soul, two reverend cardinal virtues;
But cardinal sins, and hollow hearts, I fear ye.
Mend 'em, for shame, my lords. Is this your comfort?
The cordial that ye bring a wretched lady?
A woman lost among ye, laughed at, scorned?
I will not wish ye half my miseries,
I have more charity; but say, I warned ye:
Take heed, for Heaven's sake, take heed, lest at once
The burden of my sorrows fall upon ye.

Wol. Madam, this is a mere distraction;
You turn the good we offer into envy.

Q. Kath. Ye turn me into nothing. Woe upon ye,
And all such false professors! Would you have me—
If you have any justice, any pity,
If ye be anything but churchmen's habits—
Put my sick cause into his hands that hates me?
Alas, has banish'd me his bed already;
His love, too long ago: I am old, my lords,
And all the fellowship I hold now with him
Is only my obedience. What can happen
To me, above this wretchedness? all your studies
Make me a curse, like this.

Cam.

Your fears are worse.

Q. Kath. Have I lived thus long—let me speak myself
 Since virtue finds no friends—a wife, a true one?
 A woman—I dare say, without vain glory—
 Never yet branded with suspicion?
 Have I with all my full affections
 Still met the king? loved him next heaven? obeyed him?
 Been, out of fondness, superstitious to him?
 Almost forgot my prayers, to content him?
 And am I thus rewarded? 't is not well, lords.
 Bring me a constant woman to her husband,
 One that ne'er dreamed a joy beyond his pleasure,
 And to that woman, when she has done most,
 Yet will I add an honour,—a great patience.

Wol. Madam, you wander from the good we aim at.

Q. Kath. My lord, I dare not make myself so guilty,
 To give up willingly that noble title
 Your master wed me to: nothing but death
 Shall e'er divorce my dignities.

Wol.

'Pray, hear me.

Q. Kath. 'Would I had never trod this English earth,
 Or felt the flatteries that grow upon it!
 Ye have angels' faces, but Heaven knows your hearts.
 What will become of me now, wretched lady!
 I am the most unhappy woman living.—
 [*To her Women.*] Alas! poor wenches, where are now your
 fortunes?

Shipwrecked upon a kingdom where no pity,
 No friends, no hope, no kindred weep for me,
 Almost no grave allowed me.—Like the lily,
 That once was mistress of the field and flourished,
 I'll hang my head, and perish.

Wol.

If your grace
 Could but be brought to know our ends are honest,
 You'd feel more comfort. Why should we, good lady,
 Upon what cause, wrong you? alas, our places,
 The way of our profession is against it:
 We are to cure such sorrows, not to sow 'em.
 For goodness' sake, consider what you do;
 How you may hurt yourself, ay, utterly
 Grow from the king's acquaintance by this carriage.
 The hearts of princes kiss obedience,
 So much they love it; but to stubborn spirits
 They swell and grow as terrible as storms.
 I know you have a gentle, noble temper.
 A soul as even as a calm; pray, think us
 Those we profess, peace-makers, friends, and servants.

Cam. Madam, you'll find it so. You wrong your virtues
 With these weak women's fears: a noble spirit,
 As yours was put into you, ever casts
 Such doubts, as false coin, from it. The king loves you;
 Beware, you lose it not: for us, if you please
 To trust us in your business, we are ready
 To use our utmost studies in your service.

Q. Kath. Do what ye will, my lords; and, pray forgive me,
 If I have used myself unmannerly.
 You know, I am a woman, lacking wit
 To make a seemly answer to such persons.
 Pray, do my service to his majesty:
 He has my heart yet, and shall have my prayers,
 While I shall have my life. Come reverend fathers,
 Bestow your counsels on me; she now begs,
 That little thought, when she set footing here,
 She should have bought her dignities so dear.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—Ante-chamber to the KING's Apartment.

*Enter the Duke of NORFOLK, the Duke of SUFFOLK, the
 Earl of SURREY, and the Lord CHAMBERLAIN.*

Nor. If you will now unite in your complaints,
 And force them with a constancy, the cardinal
 Cannot stand under them: if you omit
 The offer of this time, I cannot promise
 But that you shall sustain mo'e new disgraces,
 With these you bear already.

Sur. I am joyful
 To meet the least occasion that may give me
 Remembrance of my father-in-law, the Duke,
 To be revenged on him.

Suf. Which of the peers
 Have uncondemned gone by him, or at least
 Strangely neglected? when did he regard
 The stamp of nobleness in any person,
 Out of himself?

Cham. My lords, you speak your pleasures.
 What he deserves of you and me, I know;
 What we can do to him,—though now the time
 Gives way to us,—I much fear. If you cannot
 Bar his access to the king, never attempt
 Anything on him, for he hath a witchcraft
 Over the king in 's tongue.

Nor. O fear him not ;
His spell in that is out : the king hath found
Matter against him that for ever mars
The honey of his language. No, he's settled,
Not to come off, in his displeasure.

Sur. Sir,
I should be glad to hear such news as this
Once every hour.

Nor. Believe it, this is true.
In the divorce, his contrary proceedings
Are all unfolded ; wherein he appears
As I would wish mine enemy.

Sur. How came
His practices to light ?

Suf. Most strangely.

Sur. O, how ? how ?

Suf. The cardinal's letter to the pope miscarried,
And came to the eye o' the king ; wherein was read,
How that the cardinal did entreat his holiness
To stay the judgment o' the divorce ; for if
It did take place, ' I do,' quoth he, ' perceive,
My king is tangled in affection to
A creature of the queen's, Lady Anne Bullen.'

Sur. Has the king this ?

Suf. Believe it.

Sur. Will this work ?

Cham. The king in this perceives him, how he coasts,
And hedges his own way. But in this point
All his tricks founder, and he brings his physic
After his patient's death : the king already
Hath married the fair lady.

Sur. But, will the king
Digest this letter of the cardinal's ?
The Lord forbid !

Nor. Marry, amen !

Suf. No, no :
There be mo'e wasps that buzz about his nose,
Will make this sting the sooner. Cardinal Campeius
Is stol'n away to Rome ; hath ta'en no leave ;
Has left the cause o' the king unhandled, and
Is posted, as the agent of our cardinal,
To second all his plot. I do assure you,
The king cried, ' Ha !' at this.

Cham. Now, God incense him,
And let him cry, ' Ha !' louder !

Nor. But, my lord,
When returns Cranmer?

Suf. He is returned, in his opinions, which
Have satisfied the king for his divorce,
Together with all famous colleges
Almost in Christendom. Shortly, I believe,
His second marriage shall be published, and
Her coronation. Katharine no more
Shall be called queen, but Princess Dowager,
And widow to Prince Arthur.

Nor. This same Cranmer's
A worthy fellow, and hath ta'en much pain
In the King's business.

Suf. He has; and we shall see him
For it an Archbishop.

Nor. So I hear.

Suf. 'Tis so.
The Cardinal—

Enter WOLSEY and CROMWELL.

Nor. Observe, observe; he's moody.

Wol. The packet, Cromwell,
Gave 't you the king?

Crom. To his own hand, in 's bedchamber.

Wol. Looked he o' th' inside of the paper?

Crom. Presently
He did unseal them, and the first he viewed,
He did it with a serious mind; a heed
Was in his countenance. You he bade
Attend him here this morning.

Wol. Is he ready
To come abroad?

Crom. I think, by this he is.

Wol. Leave me awhile.—

[Exit CROMWELL.]

It shall be to the Duchess of Alencon,
The French King's sister: he shall marry her.—
Anne Bullen? No; I'll no Anne Bullens for him:
There 's more in 't than fair visage.—Bullen!
No, we'll no Bullens.—Speedily I wish
To hear from Rome.—The Marchioness of Pembroke!—

Nor. He's discontented.

Suf. May be, he hears the king
Does whet his anger to him.

Sur. Sharp enough,
Lord, for thy justice!—

Wol. The late queen's gentlewoman, a knight's daughter,
To be her mistress' mistress! the queen's queen!—
This candle burns not clear: 't is I must snuff it;
Then, out it goes.—What though I know her virtuous,
And well deserving? yet I know her for
A spleeny Lutheran; and not wholesome to
Our cause, that she should lie i' the bosom of
Our hard-ruled king. Again, there is sprung up
An heretic, an arch one, Cranmer; one
Hath crawled into the favour of the king,
And is his oracle.

Nor. He 's vexed at something.

Suf. I would, 't were something that would fret the string,
The master-cord of his heart!

Enter the KING, reading a schedule; and LOVELL.

Sur. The king, the king!

K. Hen. What piles of wealth hath he accumulated
To his own portion! and what expense by the hour
Seems to flow from him! How, i' the name of thrift,
Does he rake this together?—Now, my lords,
Saw you the Cardinal?

Nor. My lord, we have
Stood here observing him. Some strange commotion
Is in his brain: he bites his lip, and starts;
Stops on a sudden, looks upon the ground,
Then lays his finger on his temple; straight,
Springs out into fast gait; then stops again,
Strikes his breast hard; and anon, he casts
His eye against the moon: in most strange postures
We have seen him set himself.

K. Hen. It may well be:
There is a mutiny in 's mind. This morning
Papers of state he sent me to peruse,
As I required; and wot you what I found
There, on my conscience, put unwittingly?
Forsooth an inventory, thus importing,—
The several parcels of his plate, his treasure,
Rich stuffs, and ornaments of household, which
I find at such proud rate, that it outspeaks
Possession of a subject.

Nor. Its Heaven's will:
Some spirit put this paper in the packet,
To bless your eye withal.

K. Hen. If we did think
His contemplation were above the earth,
And fixed on spiritual object, he should still
Dwell in his musings : but, I am afraid,
His thinkings are below the moon, not worth
His serious considering.

[*He takes his seat, and whispers* LOVELL, *who goes to* WOLSEY].

Wol. Heaven forgive me !—
Ever God bless your highness !

K. Hen. Good my lord,
You are full of heavenly stuff, and bear the inventory
Of your best graces in your mind ; the which
You are now running o'er : you have scarce time
To steal from spiritual leisure a brief span
To keep your earthly audit. Sure, in that
I deem you an ill husband, and am glad
To have you therein my companion.

Wol. Sir,
For holy offices I have a time ; a time
To think upon the part of business, which
I bear i' the state ; and nature does require
Her times of preservation, which, perforce,
I, her frail son, amongst my brethren mortal,
Must give my tendence to.

K. Hen. You have said well.

Wol. And ever may your highness yoke together,
As I will lend you cause, my doing well
With my well-saying !

K. Hen. 'Tis well said again ;
And 't is a kind of good deed, to say well :
And yet words are no deeds. My father loved you ;
He said he did, and with his deed did crown
His word upon you. Since I had my office,
I have kept you next my heart ; have not alone
Employed you where high profits might come home,
But pared my present havings, to bestow
My bounties upon you.

Wol. What should this mean ?

Sur. [*Aside.*] The Lord increase this business !

King. Have I not made you
The prime man of the state ? I pray you, tell me,
If what I now pronounce you have found true :
And, if you may confess it, say withal,
If you are bound to us or no. What say you ?

Wol. My sovereign, I confess your royal graces,
 Shower'd on me daily, have been more than could
 My studied purposes requite ; which went
 Beyond all man's endeavours : my endeavours
 Have ever come too short of my desires,
 Yet fil'd with my abilities : mine own ends
 Have been mine so that evermore they pointed
 To the good of your most sacred person and
 The profit of the state. For your great graces
 Heap'd upon me, poor undeserver, I
 Can nothing render but allegiant thanks,
 My prayers to heaven for you, my loyalty,
 Which ever has and ever shall be growing,
 Till death, that winter, kill it.

King. Fairly answer'd.
 A loyal and obedient subject is
 Therein illustrated : the honour of it
 Does pay the act of it ; as, i' the contrary,
 The foulness is the punishment. I presume
 That, as my hand has open'd bounty to you,
 My heart dropp'd love, my power rain'd honour, more
 On you than any ; so your hand and heart,
 Your brain, and every function of your power,
 Should, notwithstanding that your bond of duty,
 As 'twere in love's particular, be more
 To me, your friend, than any.

Wol. I do profess
 That for your highness' good I ever labour'd
 More than mine own ; that am, have, and will be—
 Though all the world should crack their duty to you,
 And throw it from their soul ; though perils did
 Abound, as thick as thought could make 'em, and
 Appear in forms more horrid,—yet my duty,
 As doth a rock against the chiding flood,
 Should the approach of this wild river break,
 And stand unshaken yours.

King. 'Tis nobly spoken :
 Take notice, lords, he has a loyal breast,
 For you have seen him open 't. Read o'er this ;
[Giving him papers.]
 And after, this : and then to breakfast with
 What appetite you have.

*[Exit King, frowning upon Cardinal Wolsey: the
 Nobles throng after him, smiling and whispering.]*

Wol. What should this mean ?
 What sudden anger's this ? how have I reap'd it ?
 He parted frowning from me, as if ruin
 Leap'd from his eyes : so looks the chafed lion

Upon the daring huntsman that has gall'd him ;
Then makes him nothing. I must read this paper ;
I fear, the story of his anger. 'Tis so ;
This paper has undone me ; 'tis the account
Of all that world of wealth I have drawn together
For mine own ends ; indeed, to gain the popedom,
And fee my friends in Rome. O negligence !
Fit for a fool to fall by : what cross devil
Made me put this main secret in the packet
I sent the king ? Is there no way to cure this ?
No new device to beat this from his brains ?
I know 'twill stir him strongly ; yet I know
A way, if it take right, in spite of fortune,
Will bring me off again. What's this ? 'To the Pope !'
The letter, as I live, with all the business
I writ to's holiness. Nay then, farewell !
I have touch'd the highest point of all my greatness ;
And, from that full meridian of my glory,
I haste now to my setting : I shall fall
Like a bright exhalation in the evening,
And no man see me more.

*Re-enter to WOLSEY, the DUKES OF NORFOLK and SUFFOLK,
the EARL OF SURREY, and the LORD CHAMBERLAIN.*

Nor. Hear the king's pleasure, cardinal : who commands
you
To render up the great seal presently
Into our hands ; and to confine yourself
To Asher House, my lord of Winchester's,
Till you hear further from his highness.

Wol. Stay :
Where's your commission, lords? words cannot carry
Authority so weighty.

Suff. Who dare cross 'em,
Bearing the king's will from his mouth expressly?

Vol. Till I find more than will or words to do it,
I mean your malice, know, officious lords,
I dare and must deny it. Now I feel
Of what coarse metal ye are moulded, envy :
How eagerly ye follow my disgraces,
As if it fed ye ! and how sleek and wanton
Ye appear in everything may bring my ruin !
Follow your envious courses, men of malice ;
You have Christian warrant for 'em, and, no doubt,
In time will find their fit rewards. That seal,
You ask with such a violence, the king,
Mine and your master, with his own hand gave me ;
Bade me enjoy it, with the place and honours,

During my life ; and, to confirm his goodness,
Tied it by letters-patent : now, who'll take it ?

Sur. The king, that gave it.

Wol. It must be himself, then.

Sur. Thou art a proud traitor, priest.

Wol. Proud lord, thou liest :
Within these forty hours Surrey durst better
Have burnt that tongue than said so.

Sur. Thy ambition,
Thou scarlet sin, robb'd this bemoaning land
Of noble Buckingham, my father-in-law :
The heads of all thy brother cardinals,
With thee and all thy best parts bound together,
Weigh'd not a hair of his. Plague of your policy !
You sent me deputy for Ireland ;
Far from his succour, from the king, from all
That might have mercy on the fault thou gavest him ;
Whilst your great goodness, out of holy pity,
Absolved him with an axe.

Wol. This, and all else
This talking lord can lay upon my credit,
I answer is most false. The duke by law
Found his deserts : how innocent I was
From any private malice in his end,
His noble jury and foul cause can witness.
If I loved many words, lord, I should tell you,
You have as little honesty as honour,
That in the way of loyalty and truth
Toward the king, my ever royal master,
Dare mate a sounder man than Surrey can be,
And all that love his follies.

Sur. By my soul,
Your long coat, priest, protects you ; thou should'st feel.
My sword i' the life-blood of thee else. My lords,
Can ye endure to hear this arrogance ?
And from this fellow ? If we live thus tamely,
To be thus jaded by a piece of scarlet,
Farewell nobility ; let his grace go forward,
And dare us with his cap like larks.

Wol. All goodness
Is poison to thy stomach.

Sur. Yes, that goodness
Of gleaning all the land's wealth into one,
Into your own hands, cardinal, by extortion ;
The goodness of your intercepted packets
You writ to the pope against the king : your goodness,
Since you provoke me, shall be most notorious.

My lord of Norfolk, as you are truly noble,
 As you respect the common good, the state
 Of our despised nobility, our issues,
 Who, if he live, will scarce be gentlemen,
 Produce the grand sum of his sins, the articles
 Collected from his life. I'll startle you
 Worse than the sacring bell, when the brown wench
 Lay kissing in your arms, lord cardinal.

Wol. How much, methinks, I could despise this man,
 But that I am bound in charity against it !

Nor. Those articles, my lord, are in the king's hand :
 But, thus much, they are foul ones.

Wol. So much fairer
 And spotless shall my innocence arise,
 When the king knows my truth.

Sur. This cannot save you :
 I thank my memory, I yet remember
 Some of these articles ; and out they shall.
 Now, if you can blush and cry ' guilty,' cardinal,
 You'll show a little honesty.

Wol. Speak on, sir ;
 I dare your worst objections : if I blush,
 It is to see a nobleman want manners.

Sur. I had rather want those than my head. Have at
 you !
 First, that, without the king's assent or knowledge,
 You wrought to be a legate ; by which power
 You maim'd the jurisdiction of all bishops.

Nor. Then, that in all you writ to Rome, or else
 To foreign princes, *Ego et Rex meus*
 Was still inscribed ; in which you brought the king
 To be your servant.

Suf. Then that, without the knowledge
 Either of king or council, when you went
 Ambassador to the emperor, you made bold
 To carry into Flanders the great seal.

Sur. Item, you sent a large commission
 To Gregory de Cassado, to conclude,
 Without the king's will or the state's allowance,
 A league between his highness and Ferrara.

Suf. That, out of mere ambition, you have caused
 Your holy hat to be stamped on the king's coin.

Sur. Then that you have sent innumerable substance—
 By what means got, I leave to your own conscience—
 To furnish Rome, and to prepare the ways
 You have for dignities ; to the mere undoing

Of all the kingdom. Many more there are ;
Which, since they are of you, and odious,
I will not taint my mouth with.

Cham. O my lord,
Press not a falling man too far ! 'tis virtue :
His faults lie open to the laws ; let them,
Not you, correct him. My heart weeps to see him
So little of his great self.

Sur. I forgive him.

Suf. Lord cardinal, the king's further pleasure is,
Because all those things you have done of late,
By your power legatine, within this kingdom,
Fall into the compass of a præmunire,
That therefore such a writ be sued against you ;
To forfeit all your goods, lands, tenements,
Chattels, and whatsoever, and to be
Out of the king's protection. This is my charge.

Nor. And so we'll leave you to your meditations
How to live better. For your stubborn answer
About the giving back the great seal to us,
The king shall know it, and, no doubt, shall thank you.
So fare you well, my little good lord cardinal.

[*Exeunt all but Wolsey.*]

Wol. So farewell to the little good you bear me.
Farewell ! a long farewell to all my greatness !
This is the state of man : to day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes ; to morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him ;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
This many summers in a sea of glory,
But far beyond my depth : my high-blown pride
At length broke under me ; and now has left me,
Weary, and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye :
I feel my heart new open'd. O, how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours !
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars or women have :
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again.

Enter CROMWELL, and stands amazed.

Why, how now, Cromwell ?

Crom. I have no power to speak, sir.

Wol. What, amazed

At my misfortunes ? can thy spirit wonder
A great man should decline ? Nay, an you weep,
I am fall'n indeed.

Crom. How does your grace ?

Wol. Why, well ;

Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.
I know myself now ; and I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience. The king has cured me,
I humbly thank his grace ; and from these shoulders,
These ruin'd pillars, out of pity, taken
A load would sink a navy, too much honour :
O, 'tis a burden, Cromwell, 'tis a burden
Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven !

Crom. I am glad your grace has made that right use of it.

Wol. I hope I have : I am able now, methinks,
Out of a fortitude of soul I feel,
To endure more miseries and greater far
Than my weak-hearted enemies dare offer.
What news abroad ?

Crom. The heaviest and the worst
Is your displeasure with the king.

Wol. God bless him !

Crom. The next is, that Sir Thomas More is chosen
Lord chancellor in your place.

Wol. That's somewhat sudden :
But he's a learned man. May he continue
Long in his highness' favour, and do justice
For truth's sake and his conscience ; that his bones,
When he has run his course and sleeps in blessings,
May have a tomb of orphans' tears wept on 'em !
What more ?

Crom. That Cranmer is return'd with welcome,
Install'd lord archbishop of Canterbury.

Wol. That's news indeed.

Crom. Last, that the Lady Anne,
Whom the king hath in secrecy long married,
This day was view'd in open as his queen,
Going to chapel ; and the voice is now
Only about her coronation.

Wol. There was the weight that pull'd me down. O

Cromwell,

The king has gone beyond me : all my glories
 In that one woman I have lost for ever :
 No sun shall ever usher forth mine honours,
 Or gild again the noble troops that waited
 Upon my smiles. Go, get thee from me, Cromwell ;
 I am a poor fall'n man, unworthy now
 To be thy lord and master : seek the king ;
 That sun, I pray, may never set ! I have told him
 What and how true thou art ; he will advance thee ;
 Some little memory of me will stir him—
 I know his noble nature—not to let
 Thy hopeful service perish too : good Cromwell,
 Neglect him not ; make use now, and provide
 For thine own future safety.

Crom.

O my lord,

Must I, then, leave you ? must I needs forego
 So good, so noble, and so true a master ?
 Bear witness, all that have not hearts of iron,
 With what a sorrow Cromwell leaves his lord.
 The king shall have my service ; but my prayers
 For ever and for ever shall be yours.

Wol. Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear
 In all my miseries : but thou hast forced me,
 Out of thy honest truth, to play the woman.
 Let's dry our eyes : and thus far hear me, Cromwell ;
 And, when I am forgotten, as I shall be,
 And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention
 Of me more must be heard of, say, I taught thee,
 Say, Wolsey, that once trod the ways of glory,
 And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,
 Found thee a way, out of his wreck, to rise in ;
 A sure and safe one, though thy master miss'd it.
 Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me.
 Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition :
 By that sin fell the angels ; how can man, then,
 The image of his maker, hope to win by it ?
 Love thyself last : cherish those hearts that hate thee :
 Corruption wins not more than honesty.
 Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
 To silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not :
 Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
 Thy God's, and truth's ; then if thou fall'st, O Cromwell,
 Thou fall'st a blessed martyr ! Serve the king ;
 And—prithee, lead me in :
 There take an inventory of all I have,
 To the last penny ; 'tis the king's : my robe,
 And my integrity to heaven, is all

I dare now call mine own. O Cromwell, Cromwell !
 Had I but served my God with half the zeal
 I served my king, he would not in mine age
 Have left me naked to mine enemies.

Crom. Good sir, have patience.

Wol. So I have. Farewell
 The hopes of court ! my hopes in heaven do dwell.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A street in Westminster.*

Enter two Gentlemen, meeting one another.

First Gent. You're well met once again.

Sec. Gent. So are you.

First Gent. You come to take your stand here, and behold
 The Lady Anne pass from her coronation ?

Sec. Gent. 'Tis all my business. At our last encounter,
 The Duke of Buckingham came from his trial.

First Gent. 'Tis very true : but that time offer'd sorrow ;
 This, general joy.

Sec. Gent. I beseech you, what's become of Katharine,
 The princess dowager ? How goes her business ?

First Gent. That I can tell you too. The archbishop
 Of Canterbury, accompanied with other
 Learned and reverend fathers of his order,
 Held a late court at Dunstable, six miles off
 From Amptill, where the princess lay ; to which
 She was often cited by them, but appear'd not :
 And, to be short, for not appearance and
 The king's late scruple, by the main assent
 Of all these learned men she was divorced,
 And the late marriage made of none effect :
 Since which she was removed to Kimbolton,
 Where she remains now sick.

Sec. Gent. Alas, good lady !

[*Trumpets.*

The trumpets sound : stand close, the queen is coming.

[*Hautboys.*

SCENE II. Kimbolton.

*Enter KATHARINE, Dowager, sick ; led between GRIFFITH,
 her gentleman usher, and PATIENCE, her woman.*

Grif. How does your grace ?

Kath. O Griffith, sick to death !
 My legs, like loaden branches, bow to the earth,
 Willing to leave their burthen. Reach a chair :
 So ; now, methinks, I feel a little ease.
 Didst thou not tell me, Griffith, as thou led'st me,
 That the great child of honour, Cardinal Wolsey,
 Was dead ?

Grif. Yes, madam ; but I think your grace,
 Out of the pain you suffer'd, gave no ear to 't.

Kath. Prithee, good Griffith, tell me how he died :
 If well, he stepp'd before me, happily,
 For my example.

Grif. Well, the voice goes, madam :
 For after the stout Earl Northumberland
 Arrested him at York, and brought him forward,
 As a man, sorely tainted, to his answer,
 He fell sick suddenly, and grew so ill
 He could not sit his mule.

Kath. Alas, poor man !

Grif. At last, with easy roads, he came to Leicester,
 Lodged in the abbey ; where the reverend abbot,
 With all his convent, honourably received him ;
 To whom he gave these words, " O, father abbot,
 An old man, broken with the storms of state,
 Is come to lay his weary bones among ye ;
 Give him a little earth for charity ! "
 So went to bed ; where eagerly his sickness
 Pursued him still : and, three nights after this,
 About the hour of eight, which he himself
 Foretold should be his last, full of repentance,
 Continual meditations, tears, and sorrows,
 He gave his honours to the world again,
 His blessed part to heaven, and slept in peace.

Kath. So may he rest ; his faults lie gently on him !
 Yet thus far, Griffith, give me leave to speak him,
 And yet with charity. He was a man
 Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking
 Himself with princes ; one that, by suggestion,
 Tied all the kingdom : simony was fair-play ;
 His own opinion was his law : i' the presence
 He would say untruths ; and be ever double
 Both in his words and meaning : he was never,
 But where he meant to ruin, pitiful :
 His promises were, as he then was, mighty ;
 But his performance, as he is now, nothing :
 Of his own body he was ill, and gave
 The clergy ill example.

Grif. Noble madam,
Men's evil manners live in brass; their virtues
We write in water. May it please your highness
To hear me speak his good now?

Kath. Yes, good Griffith;
I were malicious else.

Grif. This cardinal,
Though from an humble stock, undoubtedly
Was fashioned to much honour from his cradle.
He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one;
Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and persuading:
Lofty and sour to them that loved him not;
But to those men that sought him, sweet as summer.
And though he were unsatisfied in getting,
Which was a sin, yet in bestowing, madam,
He was most princely: ever witness for him
Those twins of learning that he raised in you,
Ipswich and Oxford! one of which fell with him,
Unwilling to outlive the good that did it;
The other, though unfinish'd, yet so famous,
So excellent in art, and still so rising,
That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue.
His overthrow heap'd happiness upon him;
For then, and not till then, he felt himself,
And found the blessedness of being little:
And, to add greater honours to his age
Than man could give him, he died fearing God.

Kath. After my death I wish no other herald,
No other speaker of my living actions,
To keep mine honour from corruption,
But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.
Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,
With thy religious truth and modesty,
Now in his ashes honour: peace be with him!
Patience, be near me still; and set me lower:
I have not long to trouble thee. Good Griffith,
Cause the musicians play me that sad note.
I named my knell, whilst I sat meditating
On that celestial harmony I go to.

[*Sad and solemn music.*]

Grif. She is asleep: good wench, let's sit down quiet,
For fear we wake her: softly, gentle Patience.

The vision. Enter, solemnly tripping one after another, six
personages, clad in white robes, wearing on their heads
garlands of bays, and golden vizards on their faces;
branches of bays or palm in their hands. They first

congee unto her, then dance ; and, at certain changes, the first two hold a spare garland over her head ; at which the other four make reverent curtsies ; then the two that held the garland deliver the same to the other next two, who observe the same order in their changes, and holding the garland over her head : which done, they deliver the same garland to the last two, who likewise observe the same order : at which, as it were by inspiration, she makes in her sleep signs of rejoicing, and holdeth up her hands to heaven : and so in their dancing vanish, carrying the garland with them. The music continues.

Kath. Spirits of peace, where are ye ? are ye all gone,
And leave me here in wretchedness behind ye ?

Grif. Madam, we are here.

Kath. It is not you I call for :
Saw ye none enter since I slept ?

Grif. None, madam.

Kath. No ? Saw you not, even now, a blessed troop
Invite me to a banquet ; whose bright faces
Cast thousand beams upon me, like the sun ?
They promised me eternal happiness ;
And brought me garlands, Griffith, which I feel
I am not worthy yet to wear : I shall, assuredly.

Grif. I am most joyful, madam, such good dreams
Possess your fancy.

Kath. Bid the music leave,
They are harsh and heavy to me. *[Music ceases.]*

Pat. Do you note
How much her grace is alter'd on the sudden ?
How long her face is drawn ! how pale she looks,
And of an earthy cold ! Mark her eyes !

Grif. She is going, wench : pray, pray.

Pat. Heaven comfort her !

Kath. Comfort comes too late ;
'Tis like a pardon after execution :
That gentle physic, given in time, had cured me ;
But now I am past all comforts here, but prayers.
I pray the king may ever flourish,
When I shall dwell with worms, and my poor name
Banished the kingdom. I have commended to his goodness
The model of our chaste loves, his young daughter ;
The dews of heaven fall thick in blessings on her !

Beseeching him to give her virtuous breeding,
 She is young, and of a noble modest nature,
 I hope she will deserve well,—and a little
 To love her for her mother's sake, that loved him,
 Heaven knows how dearly.
 Tell the king his long trouble now is passing
 Out of this world; tell him, in death I bless'd him,
 For so I will. Mine eyes grow dim. Farewell.
 Griffith, farewell. Nay, Patience,
 You must not leave me yet;
 Call in more women. When I am dead, good wench,
 Let me be used with honour: strew me over
 With maiden flowers, that all the world may know
 I was a chaste wife to my grave; embalm me,
 Then lay me forth: although unqueened, yet like
 A queen, and daughter to a king, inter me.
 I can no more.

There is an amusing and pretentious article upon this play in the *Athenæum* of 1893, in which the writer (of course he is infallible) lays it down *ex cathedra*, that William Shakspeare did not write a line of it. The rash and faulty judgment of W. Aldis Wright has no doubt inspired this article. It is to be feared also that Mr. Furnival has joined in this foolish crusade. It is one that it is imperatively necessary to put down, and which can be disposed of, better than by a bushel of argument, by the publication of the play itself; no one with any knowledge of poetry, who reads it, can doubt as to its authenticity. Of course the evidence of the first folio is summarily put aside "because modern criticism has shaken its foundation," and this fact is used as if it were conclusive upon the issue: as if any sane person had ever considered the evidence of the folio itself infallible, and as if indeed the question of its fallibility can seriously effect the matter. It may well be, and it is undoubtedly a fact, that Heming and Condell were no critics in the sense being able to distinguish the actual work of the poet, and they have, improperly, admitted several plays into their work which were merely acted in the theatre, and for which Shakspeare was not responsible. What then? Does this admission permit any critic to discard what play he pleases, or to include any others, without reasons or facts to support him,

assuredly not. The fact that a place is found in the first folio is *prima facie*—good evidence that Shakspeare wrote most of it, but as respects individual plays it is only evidence that may be rejected as worthless, if stronger reasons can be found for such rejection. Now the only reasons that can justify any judgment is, either that it can be proved that the play was written by someone else, or, failing this, that from its construction, its sentiments, objects, and conception, it is incongruous with what is known of the poet's work, and even this judgment must be tempered by the knowledge that Shakspeare was once young and in his youth may have varied considerably in his style.

W. Aldis Wright, who appears to have some regard for Shakspeare, yet can find nothing beautiful or worthy of a true poet in this play, asserts that the ideas are not great, but are simply sentimental. Well this is strong, but it is only Mr. Wrights opinion, and that happily can be tested, and must be at once condemned by an appeal to the work itself.

Mr. Wright is indeed a critic of feeble power and perverse judgment. Is it that he has no soul for music ? or does he lack power to appreciate poetry ? or is his judgment so warped by a narrow spirit of sectarianism that he can see no good in a religion which can only base its support upon faith, and has not the sure foundation of an Act of Parliament to confirm it ?

Let anyone read the magnificent defence of Queen Mary. It is bold and defiant, yet feminine and delicate. It has a subtle power which no amount of strong epithets could produce. Its effect, though apparently uttered in weakness, has an absolutely withering power. In no case throughout his works has Shakspeare displayed greater power than in this beautiful and natural response to the wily arguments of the prelate. It is full of poetry, and acute judgment as well. Probably in this scene the mind of Campion was expended, and Shakspeare only embellished it with his art.

These critics build there arguments upon each other's works. One boldly lays down some tremendous proposition, and the next (or perhaps the same man in another paper) assumes its truth, and propounds some still further nonsense upon it. Henry VIII is not Shakspeare's, because some critic (or the same) has annihilated the folio. What then? the two propositions have nothing in common. Because the folio may have work in it that is not Shakspeare's, it does not follow that none of it is his. It is one thing to demolish Heming and Condell; it is quite another to destroy Shakspeare. What has modern criticism done that it has to be cited as infallible? It has established to its satisfaction that *Pericles* was the work of Shakspeare. Heming and Condell knew better, and though the work was played in their theatre and called his, they rejected it. The work itself has only to be referred to to confound modern criticism and to prove it foolish. Shakspeare may have written some of it, and it was certainly played at his theatre and called his; but it was most certainly not his composition or design, and modern criticism is put out of court by the evidence of the play itself.

Mr. Aldis Wright most unfairly argues against the authenticity of this play, upon the assumption that the fifth act was Shakspeare's, of which he himself writes, quoting Spedding,—“The greater part in which the interest ought to be gathering to a head” (had he any power of criticism he would have seen that the interest closed with the death of Catharine) “is occupied with matters in which we have not been prepared to take any interest by what went before and on which no interest is reflected by what comes after.” Surely a more complete condemnation of this act could not have been penned, and how a writer, with any pretension to fairness or knowledge, after seeing this could have used this fifth Act as an argument that Shakspeare did not write the whole is simply incomprehensible. This is not criticism—it is calumny.

Spedding also wrote this: “The singularity of *Henry VIII.* is that while four-fifths of the play (and he referred to

the Prologue, which proclaims the purpose) are occupied in matters which are to make us incapable of mirth, the remaining fifth is devoted to joy and triumph, and ends with universal festivity." And Spedding writes truly : "I know of no other play in Shakspeare which is chargeable with a fault like this ; none in which the moral sympathy of the spectator is not carried along the main current of action to the end."

Mr. Wright pursues the same unfair method when he deals with the chronology of the play. Of course, if you assume that the fifth Act was Shakspeare's, you cannot condemn it too severely ; but apart from this, the errors as to dates are practically unimportant, and such as a poet might be fairly excused in making in order to improve the action. In the first Scene there is a reference to the seizure of the English merchant's goods at Bordeaux, which occurred in 1522, and the arrest of Buckingham, which took place in April, 1521, is recorded afterwards. Mr. Wright thinks that from this reference the chronology of this Scene is "hopelessly entangled." The man who can make much out of such a point can have little poetry in his soul. What did it matter ? The poet wished to give the full meaning to the worthlessness of the interview of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and simply anticipated one of its effects. Mr. Wright probably never heard of a poetical licence. Here is a fair instance of one.

The writer in the *Athenæum* (no doubt with Aldis Wright's efforts before him) agrees that the metrical tests vigorously applied are not infallible ; and yet he practically follows Mr. Wright's conclusions, and condemns the play on these grounds, and following him he writes : "Not a line does it contain that bear the stamp of Shakspeare's greatness, or that might have been written by any of a dozen of his fellow dramatists." Here is criticism gone mad. A more ridiculous remark was never penned, and one more utterly opposed to truth, and yet it fairly represents the voice of modern criticism. This monstrous piece of criticism is sufficient to annihilate modern criticism of

Shakspere, and renders it essential to publish the whole of this grand play in order to refute it.

It must not be taken that the author would suggest that the whole of that which is here published was written by Shakspere. It may well be that much of scenes three and four (act one), which Spedding assigned bodily to Fletcher, and some other portions have been interpolated; yet it is idle to reject them wholly (as the fifth act can fairly be rejected), because much of the motives and action of the play depend upon these parts, and much of it must have been present in the poet's mind when he wrote his work.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE SHAKSPERE FAMILY.

*Whose footsteps yet are found
In her rough woodlands more than any other ground,
That mighty Arden, held even in her height of pride,
Her one hand touching Trent, the other Severn's side.*
DRAYTON.

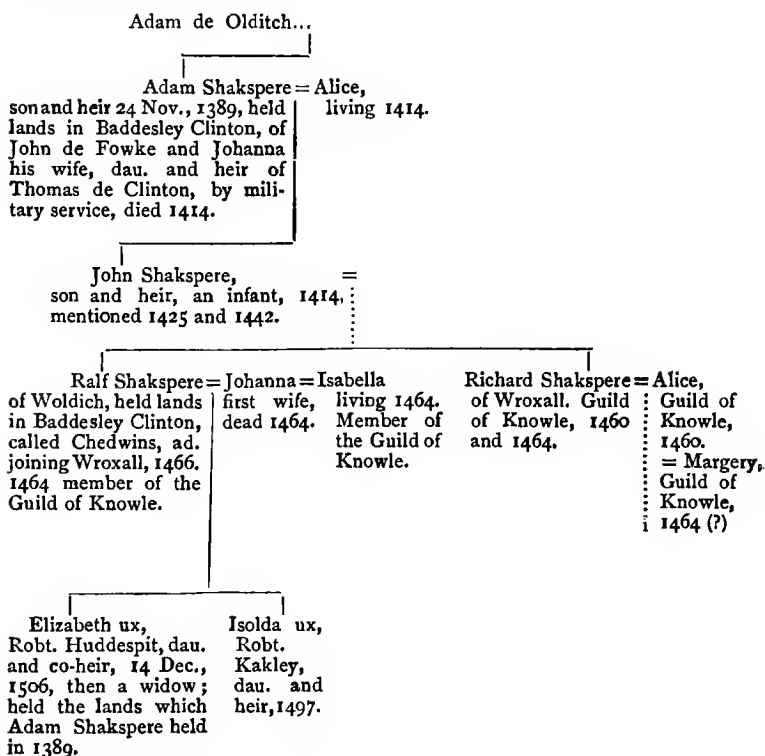
*Go one of you find out the Forester,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.*

"My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind, so flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung with ears that sweep away the morning dew, crook-knee'd, and dew-lap'd, like Thessalian bulls, slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells each under each."—*Midsummer Night's Dream, Act iv., Sc. i.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the large number of searchers who have attempted to trace the early history of this family, but little has hitherto been published of a reliable character, and absolutely nothing of an early date, no one having attempted to trace higher up than the poet's grandfather, and yet materials for proving the descent of a Warwickshire family of this name lay open to every one, and certainly it is a little remarkable that so little has hitherto been brought to light. The author discovered by an accident,

from examining the Griffin wills at Northampton, that the great family of Griffin (of Braybrook) had given a wife to one of the Shakspeare's, in the time of King Henry the VIII. ; a very little research led to the discovery of the Wroxall Court Rolls, which supply a fragmentary pedigree from the time of King Henry V., of a family holding property in that Manor under the Prioress, though it was probable that they did not reside there, because they never appeared upon the homage. The editor of the *Daily Gazette* (of Birmingham) seeing the importance of the author's discovery, not only inserted a long letter upon the subject but most courteously furnished the author with a number of reprints, which enabled him to communicate the discovery to his friends and fellow-workers in this field of literature. Subsequently the editor of the *Times* condescended to admit two letters—one recapitulating the evidence already published in the *Birmingham Gazette*, and another giving the results of a search in the Court Rolls of Wroxall. The effect of these letters was truly surprising ; many prominent papers throughout the kingdom reproduced them, or gave leading articles upon them, several copying the letters verbatim. No less a learned paper than *Notes and Queries* was so generous as to do this, and much valuable information might have been elicited had not this remarkable success apparently excited the envy of a supporter of the Halliwell-Phillips school, who wrote, in utter ignorance of the subject, misquoting records which he could not understand, and affecting to "break links," and otherwise behaving himself in a very unfair and ridiculous manner, and his ill-natured attack—which he did not confine to one paper—unfortunately caused the editor of the *Times* to close his columns to further correspondence ; and to shut out a very valuable letter from the Rev. Mr. Norris, which, however, subsequently, happily, appeared in *Notes and Queries*, and which supplements the evidence given by the Wroxall Rolls and enables the pedigree of the family to be traced from an earlier period than could be deduced from the Wroxall Court Rolls alone.

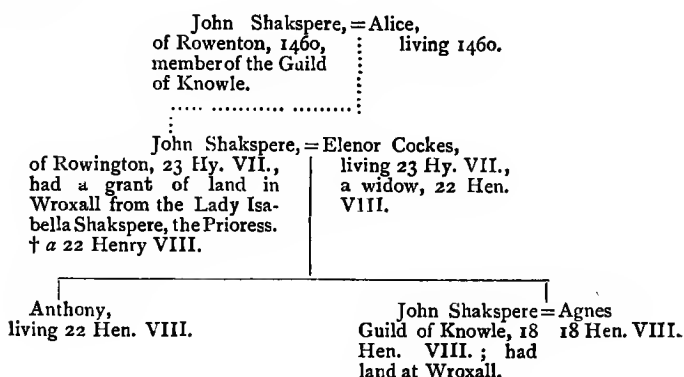
The following pedigree can be deduced from the letter in *Notes and Queries* :—



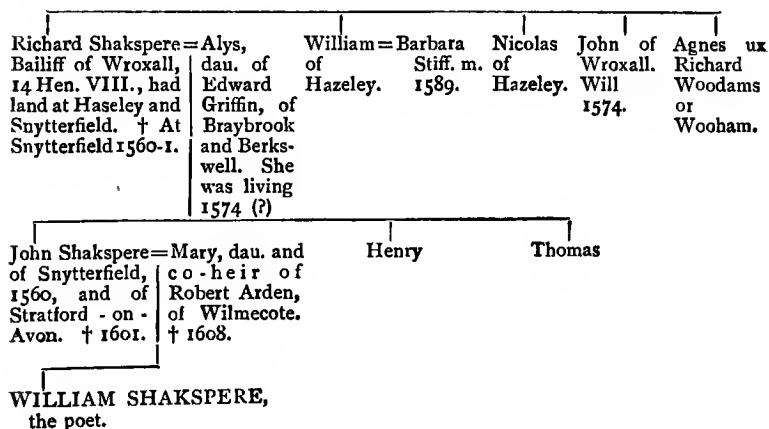
There can be but little doubt but that the records from which the Rev. Mr. Norris gives his information must once have been the property of Henry Ferrars, Lord of Baddesley Clinton, himself a great antiquary, and therefore, necessarily, a lover of truth, who would have been only anxious to give the best information respecting England's greatest bard, and the more so that Ferrars himself was a noble Catholic, who suffered greatly through the vile tyranny of the Virgin Queen, and he would have been glad to aid in the proof that the poet and his family were also members of the true Church. The author attempted in vain to get further information from Baddesley. But it is useless to repine; one can only regret that unfor-

tunate illiberality has closed this avenue to knowledge. It may perhaps be permitted to ask why have these interesting facts been so long concealed from the public, and why are they only half published now ?

The following pedigree can be deduced from the Wroxall Court Rolls :—



This pedigree can be shown from Wills and Parish Registers :—



In the absence of further proof, which can doubtless be obtained from Baddesley Clinton and from a proper search at

the Worcester Probate Registry, it would be unsafe to complete this pedigree.

It must be admitted that its details are most unsatisfactory, and the author appealed to the Rev. Mr. Norris to give him an opportunity to inspect the records upon which he founded his letter to *Notes and Queries*, from which in all probability, if properly and fully abstracted, a clear pedigree might be deduced ; but that gentleman replied stating that he did not feel at liberty to make any further communications ; so for the present this pedigree must remain disjointed. But taken in connection with the entries from the Court Rolls of Wroxall, presently given, and the notices of the Guild of Knowle, there cannot be a doubt that this is the true pedigree of the poet ; and that, in all probability, it was for distinguished bravery in the wars of King Edward III., or of Kings Henry IV. and V., and possibly at Cressy and Agincourt, that Adam (son of Adam de Oldich) acquired for himself the grant of lands in Baddesley Clinton, held by military service, which so long remained in the hands of his descendants, and to which the Heralds refer obscurely in their account of the poet's ancestors. At present all that can be positively stated is that, for several centuries before the time of the poet, his family had resided in the Forest of Arden, holding their property under the Clintons and the Ferrars, and also under the Priory of Wroxall. We fail, unfortunately, to find any early account of them in the Records of Wroxall Priory, for the Cartulary appears to have been lost. Sir William Dugdale, at the time of writing his *Monasticon*, had no trace of it. The earliest record we have of the family in the Court Rolls of Wroxall is in one dated 5th Henry V.—it is a grant of land by one Elizabeth Shakspeare to John Lone and William Prins of a messuage with three crofts of land. (In the 22 Henry VIII., in the same rolls, is a surrender from Alice Lone of a messuage and five crofts to William Shakspeare and Agnes his wife, which probably relates to the same property). The next notice of the family is that of the Lady Isabella Shakspeare, who was Prioress of Wroxall in the reign of

Edward IV., and who apparently continued in that office till the 23 Henry VII., when she granted land there to John Shakspere. There appears to be a still earlier, but only a fragmentary, mention of a Thomas Shakspere at Coventry, only some eight or ten miles distant.

Joseph Hunter, in the 1st Volume of his Shakspere Notes in the British Museum, (Additional M.S. 24,494, article 246), gives a note without date or reference, except that it is from the Exchequer, to the effect that it contains the names of 41 persons of Coventry indicted of felony, who had fled, and their goods were forfeited, Thomas Shepeye and Henry Wilcock being bailiffs. The particular entry as to Thomas Shakspere is that he being a merchant, being indicted of felony, had fled and forfeited his goods. It does not follow that there was any disgrace in the matter; a felon at that date might be merely a political offender, or perhaps he was involved in some rebellion. Hunter could give no date for this roll, and of course he fails to give the proper reference or description of it. A search at the Record Office for the indictment has failed to produce any evidence whatever, but a printed list of the Bailiffs of Coventry gives the names of Thomas Shepeye and Henry Dilcock as bailiffs in 1359, and this is probably the date of the record, for Wilcock is a very likely error for the less common name of Dilcock.

This is the earliest notice of the name of Shakspere yet found in Warwickshire.

We find in the records of the Guild of Knowle the name of a Thomas Shakspere and Christian, his wife, at Rowenton, as early as 1476, and again a Thomas was living at Balsal, and with Alice, his wife, was a member of the same Guild in 1486; and in 28 Henry VIII. we find the names of Thomas and Richard Shakspere amongst the Archers of King Henry the VIII. All these places—Rowenton, Woldich, Balsal, Berkswell, and Wroxall, are close together, and Baddesley Clinton is in the

midst of them, leaving but little doubt that the cradle of the family was at the latter place.

There is a remarkably fine collection of Court Rolls for Wroxall, now in the P.R.O., which, fortunately for posterity, were seized at the date of the dissolution of the Monastery, by that pious monarch, King Henry VIII. No doubt the tender conscience of the King was disturbed lest the good Nuns should have their minds diverted from the exercise of their religion by such sublunary attractions as lands and tenements.

We find in the Valor Ecclesiasticus evidence of the position of Richard Shakspeare, who held the office of bailiff and collector for them, together with an account of these dangerous temptations to the sin of covetousness. The date of this record is not quite clear from the printed account ; it no doubt took some time to absorb the lands and goods of so many religious foundations, and the nearest date for the spoilation of this part of the country was the writ for Hereford, which was dated the 30th June, 26 Henry VIII., and the return was enrolled Hilary Term 29 Henry VIII. There is a date of a commission for Worcester and Warwick of the 18th October 33 Henry VIII., and this date may be that of this act of vandalism, though it is probably too late for it.

This return shows that Sir Edward Ferrars, Capital Senescal of the the Priory, for his fee held lands valued at 26s. 8d. ; and that Richard Shakspeare, bailiff and collector of rents of the said Priory, held a fee valued at 40s. per annum. He, however, seems to have been displaced in his collectorship before this period, for John Hall was appointed collector of rents by letter patent, dated 4th January, 26 Henry VIII. The Priory amongst other places held rents in Hatton, Haseley, Balsal, and 24s. in Cheping Warden.

Notwithstanding the connection of the Shaksperes with Wroxall Priory, it would hardly seem that they resided in that parish until about King Henry the VIII.'s reign ; for, though.

considerable landowners, they are not found as jurors at the Courts. The earliest rolls contain no mention of the name, nor is any to be found until the 5th year of Henry V.; yet there were many earlier rolls.

The first (No. 93, Portfolio 207) is dated St. Martin's, 14th.....; the name of the King is gone; and by the Record authorities it is assumed to be from the handwriting (a very deceptive guide) "probably of the date of King Edward I." The next roll, however (No. 94), is clearly dated the 17th Edward III.; whilst No. 95 is 46 Edward III. So that probably the first is of the early part of the reign of Edward III. The handwriting of the latter part of the reign of Edward I. and the beginning of Edward III. being very similar. The first roll gives no Shakspeare, but there is a notice of one Adam, son of William of the Nash, as well as Roger and Philip Nash of that place—probably the cradle of the family of Nash—so closely connected afterwards with the poet; and it may be that this Adam of the Nash was identical with Adam de Woldich, and this would give his pedigree for one degree higher.

In Roll No. 96 of the same series we find two names also closely connected with the poet's family—those of John Coombe and John Taylor—under date 8 Richard II. The occurrence of these three names in the cradle of the Shakspeare family is certainly remarkable, and would rather tend to the conclusion, were there nothing else remaining to prove it, that they all came from the same spot.

The first entry of the family at Wroxall is at a Court held at the Feast of St. Philip and St. James, 5 Henry V., where the following entry occurs:—

Ball'us D'ne pres' q'd Elizabeth Shakspeare que tenuit de D'na unu' mesuag' cu' trib's croftis t're cu' pertin' ad volunt' D'ne sc'dum cons' man'ii' fecit inde demissione Joh'i Lone et Will'o Pryns extra cur' contr' cons' manii' qui quide' Joh'es et Will'us fecerunt inde alia demissione cuid' Ric'o Peny extr' cur' et sine licentia.

From this record it can only be gathered that one Elizabeth Shakspeare—whether maid, wife, or widow does not appear—demised a messuage and three crofts of land, which she held at will, to John Lone and William Pryns, who again leased it to Richard Peny. It does not show where this Elizabeth Shakspeare lived either at the date of the lease or that of the Court. The name Prince or Prins is to be found in the Rolls as early as 17 Edward III., and the family of Lone appear again, holding property in connection with the Shaksperes in the 22nd year of King Henry VIII., about which time they changed their name to Lane; and we find them afterwards in the Heralds' Visitations clearly related to the Coombs, Nashes, and Shaksperes, of Stratford-on-Avon—another link connecting that family with the Shaksperes of Wroxall. It may perhaps be best here to give the names of the Shakspeare family who enrolled themselves, or their relatives, in the Guild of Knowle. They are to be found there from the earliest period of this Register to its close—that is, from about 1450 to the 18th Henry VIII :—

C. 1457.—Richard Shakspeare, and Alice his wife, of Woldich (probably Oldditch adjoining Wroxhall).

1460.—John Shakspeare, and Alice his wife, of Rowenton.

1464.—Johanna Shakspeare.

Ralf Shakspeare, Johanna his first wife, and Isabella his second.

Richard Shakspeare, and Margeria his wife, of Wroxall.

1476.—Thomas Shakspeare, and Christian his wife, of Rowenton. Rich. Sch'pere of Warwick. (This name is given as *Schow* by the Editor).

1486.—Prayers for the soul of Thomas Shakspeare. Thomas Shakspeare, and Alice his wife, of Balsal. Alice Shakspeare for the soul of Thomas Shakspeare. Christopher Shakspeare, and Isabella, of Packwood.

19 Henry VII.—For the soul of the Lady Isabella Shakspeare, formerly Prioress of Wroxall. (This lady was living in the 23rd of Henry VII.; and possibly these prayers were given for her soul whilst she was alive,—a common practice in those days). Or it may be that the record date of the 23rd Henry VII. is incorrect.

1526.—The Lady Jane Shakspeare, formerly Prioress of Wroxall. (She died at Haseley, 1570).

18 Henry VIII.—Richard Shakspeare and Alice his wife.

William Shakspeare and Agnes his wife.

John Shakspeare and Johanna his wife.

Richard Woodham and Agnes his wife.

These five last entries may have been made after the dissolution of Wroxall, or it may mean that they were the living members of the family at that period. A muster-roll, said to be of the date 28 Henry VIII., gives the names of Thomas and Richard Shakspeare, archers of Rowington ; William, Shakspeare, an archer of Wroxall ; and Richard, a bilman of that place.

The Minister's Accounts of 24th April, 28 Henry VIII., give valuable information relative to Wroxall Priory, then lately dissolved.

George Throckmorton was then Capital Steward.

John Hall, of Hatton, and Thomas Hawes, Collectors.

Amongst the tenants were William Lane, John Rabon, Richard Wodham.

Richard Shakspeare paid 7s. 9d. rent of a cottage with its appurtenances, held by copy of Court Roll and a heriot.

William Shakspeare paid 10s. for a messuage, etc., held by copy, etc.

There was also a rent of 6s. 8d. for a messuage or tenement in Wroxall, with an orchard and five crofts of land, late in the tenure of John Shakspeare deceased, demised to Alice Taylor, of Hanwell, in the County of Oxford, by Indenture dated 20th March, 24 Henry VIII., for 60 years ; and the said Alice did suit of Court to the said Manor of Wroxall or Hatton, and paid Heriot, and it was not lawful for her to cut trees without license, but she had sufficient firebote and haybote, etc.

William Lucy paid rent for lands in Hatton.

Walter Gryffyn, Kt., paid 24s. rent for the Prioress's lands, etc., in Chypping warden.

There was a rent of 8s. payable for a farm of three crofts and one grove in Haseley, demised to Richard Wodham and Richard Shakspere by Indenture dated 5th June, 15 Henry VIII.

This account is partly added to in the Augmentation Books in the P.R.O.

The following entry is a sequel to these Minister's Accounts:—Patent Roll, dated 16th June, 34 Henry VIII.,—being a grant of lands in Wroxall, late belonging to the Monastery, made to Richard Andrews and Leonard Chamberlain, in the several tenures of Joan Thompson, widow, Alice Washford Roo, Thomas Bryan and wife, Richard Ball, John Little, William Lane, John Rabon, William Rogers, Richard Wodham, John Ede, John Eton, John Hoggins, Richard Shakspere, Isabella Lewis, widow, William Shakspere, Richard Mason, Edward Bailly, John Byrde, Richard Nade and wife, and Richard Wherritt.

Also a messuage and tenement in Wroxall, also late belonging to the said Monastery, with one orchard and five acres of land, late in the tenure of John Shakspere, and afterwards in the tenure of Alice Taillour.

Leonard Chamberlain and Richard Andrews, after the manner of the times, did not keep this property; but it was immediately sold by them to the Burgoynes, who long resided at Wroxall Priory. Chamberlain and his companion were probably nominees or trustees for some great personage who did not care to have his name published in connection with the transaction, it might be indeed that they were the nominees of the Burgoyne family.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE.

(Pursuant to Statute 1 and 2 Vict., c. 94.)

COURT ROLLS (GENERAL SERIES), PORTFOLIO 207, No. 99.

[EXTRACTS.]

Wroxale ss Ad cur' d'ne Isabelle Shakspere Priorisse tent' ibin
die m'cur in crastino aiar' anno 11 Henrici vij xxiiij^{do}

venit Joh'es Shakspere et cepit de dict' dna unu' mesuagiu' iiij^{or} croft' ac una' grovam cu' (? in) Crosse Fild cu' suis p'tin in Wroxale hend' sibi Elene ux' sue ac Antonio filio eor'de' Joh'is et Elene tenend' eis' scd'm consuetudine' manii' ib'm Reddend' inde annuatim dict' d'ne et successor' suis xvij. s. ij. d. (is this 17s. 9d ?) dando ecia' ad quemlib't eor' decessu' sive recessu' unu' h'iett sed'm consuet' manii' p'dci. Et dat dno de fine ad ingress' duos capones. Et admis' est tenens. Et fecit fidelitate.

Indorso Shaksperē. (This parchment is sown to the following Roll) :—

Wroxale ss Visus Franc' pleg' cu' parva cur' d'ne Agnetis Lyttyll priorisse ib'm tent' ib'm die martis videlit' xj die Octobris anno regni Regis Henr' octavi xxij^{da} tempore.

EDWARDI FERRERS MILIT' SENESCALL' IB'M.

(Richard Shakspere was on the jury.)

Modo de parva cur'.

Ad hanc cur' vener' Elena Cockes vidua nup' uxor Johis Shaksperē et Antonius Shaksperē fil . . . et Johis Et sursu' reddider' in man' dce' d'ne unu' (surs redd herriett x. s.) mesuagiu quatuor crofta ac unam grovam . . . cu suis ptin' in Wroxale unde accidit d'ne herriett una vacca coloris rubii app'ciat ad (Cap'co ter'r) x. s. rem—et sup hoc ad eande' cur venit Johes Rabon et cepit de dict' d'na p'dem mes' iiij^{or} croft' unam grova'. . . Fylde cu suis p'tin cui d'na p sen^{lm} suu concessit inde seisina' hend' p'dem mes' croft et cet'a p'missa. . . . Johi et Agneti uxori ejus ac Richardo filio eoru'de' Johis et Agnete tenend' eis' p t'mio vite eor'. . . . viventi sed'm consuetud' man'ii ib'm reddend' inde d'ce d'ne et successor' suis an^{ti} ad t'mio's ib'm usu. . . et alia' s'vic inde p'us debit' et de jur' consuet' Dando eciam ad quemlit' decessu' sive recessu' de . . . herriett se'd'm cons' man'ii p'dci Et dat (Fin. iiij. li.) d'ne de fine ingressu' iiij. li. Et fecit fidelita. . . . tenens. Et ad hanc' cur

p'sentat' est p' homag' q'd Alicia Lone ext^a cur' sursu'
 reddid. quinq' croft' cu'
 p'tin' in Wroxale unde accidit d'ne de herieth (xij.
 s. herieth) una vacca nigri coloris.
 custod ball' d'ne. Et sup hoc ad eande'
 cur' venit (capco terr) Willms Shakespere et cepit de d'.
 croft cu p'tin' cui d'na p' sen^u suu'
 concessit inde seisinā h'end sibi et Agnet.
 Willi et Agnetis tenend eis p' tmio' vite
 eor' et eor' diucius viventī d'ce d'ne
 et successor' suis an^u x. s. ad tmios ibm usual. . . .
 eciam ad queml'it decessu' sive
 recessu' success'. (Fin. liij. s. iij. d.) ad ingrm (liij. s.
 iij. d.)

Et fecit d'ne fidelit' Et admiss' est tenens.

Hatton et Wroxale ss. Visus Franc' pleg' cu' pva' cur' d'ne
 Agnetis Littyll p'iorisse de Wroxale tent' ib'm die Martis
 videlit' xxj^{mo} die Aprilis anno re'gni' Reg Henrici octavi
 vicesimo quinto.

xiiij. Jurat ss. p' d'no Rege	Johes Tybott	{ Ricus Wodham Johes Ede Johes Byrde Johes Rabon	{ Ricus Shakespere Thomas Eborall Willms Rogers Johes Eton.
	Ricus Wherett		
	Ricus Tompson		
	Johes Littyll		
	Jur. Qui jurat et on'at.		

Ellec'co Offic'	{	Joh'es Rabon elect' est Decenar de Wroxale loco Will Lone.
		Ricus Shakespere elect' est Gustat' s'vis de Wroxale.
		Ricus Wherrett elect' est Gustat' s'vis in Hatton.

Et sunt Jurat'.

Ss Homag ibm videlit' Jur s'up^a dci p'sent qd.

Obit ten ss. Et qd Johes Shakespere qui de dna tenuit sed'm
 cons' man'ni unu' mes cu' gardino et iij^{or} croft terr' cu'
 p'tin in Wroxale obiit cit^a ult' cur' unde ac'cit d'ne de
 herieth una juvencula coloris nigri (h'ett ix. s.) app'ciat'
 ad ix. s. et rem in custod' d'ne Et qd dict' mes' et ceta'
 p'missa cu' p'tin rev'ti debent dne p' defectu' tenent' etc.

I certify that the foregoing are true and authentic extracts.

R. DOUGLAS TRIMMER,

Assistant Keeper of the Public Records.

21 October 1895.

If the learned reader will observe that the premises, the subject of the Rolls of the 23rd Henry VII. ; the 11th October, 22 Henry VIII. ; and of the 21st April, 25 Henry VIII., in each case, consist of a messuage, 4 crofts and a grove or garden (in the two first documents it is called a grove, and in the last a garden), it will be tolerably apparent that they all relate to the same property ; it is quite clear that the two first Rolls do, since, curiously, they are sewn together upon the Rolls. The question arises whether the John and Agnes of the Roll of 22 Henry VIII. were Rabons or Shaksperes ; if not the latter how came John Shakspere to die possessed of this property in 25 Henry VIII. ? This Roll of 22 Henry VIII. has suffered greatly, as this transcript shows, and an important portion at the end of each line has actually perished, so that it is dangerous wholly to trust to it. Possibly the solution is that John Rabon was only an attorney to receive seizin on the part of John Shakspere, and that this is either omitted from the statement or it has perished ; or it may be, of course, that there were two John Shaksperes holding property in Wroxhall at this period. It is also conceivable that the name Rabon is a mistake for Shakspere. However, it should be noted that there certainly was a John Rabon living at Wroxall at the time, and as certainly no John Shakspere was, or had been, resident there who was rich enough to be assessed in the subsidies. In no single Court Roll of Wroxall do we find a John Shakspere on the homage. A Richard Shakspere was upon the homage at this very period, and was appointed ale-taster in 25 Henry VIII. This was probably the weaver, and not the bailiff of the Manor, who was probably the Archer for Rowenton.

Curiously it may again be observed that the Subsidy Rolls—those invaluable records for showing the actual residence of people—do not show a John resident at Wroxall at any date ; but in 14, 15, and 16 Henry VIII., John *Senior* and John *Junior* were resident contemporaneously in the adjoining village of Rowington, and in 34 and 37 Henry VIII. one John Shakspere was there.

The Subsidy Rolls show a Richard Shakspere resident at Hampton Corley, who was probably the bailiff of Wroxall of 14 Henry VIII., and who resided upon the property belonging to the Priory in that parish, but who does not appear to be assessed again there ; and two years later a Richard is resident at Wroxall, who was not there in 14 Henry VIII. ; in 34-37 Henry VIII., when only the name of William is to be found at Wroxhall, a Richard is assessed at Rowenton.

The evidence given by the Subsidy Rolls may here conveniently be taken :—

192 (128).—14 and 15 Henry VIII.
Rowington. John Shaxspere Senior ... £7

192 (127).—16 Henry VIII.
Hampton Corley. Richard Shakyspere.
Rowington. John Shakesper. Goods ... £6
John Shakesper, junior. do. ... 4os.
Wroxall. Richard Shakspere. do. ... 4os.

192 (165).—34-5 Henry VIII.
Rowington. John Shakspere. ... 3d.
Thomas „ ... 12d.
Richard „ ... 10d.
Laurans „ ... 3d.
Wroxall. William „ ... 12d.
William „ ... 3d.
William „ ... 3d.

192 (171).—37 Henry VIII.
Rowington. John „ ... £9
Wroxall. William „ ... £6

193 (235).—35 Elizabeth.
Rowington. Thomas Shaxspere Goods ... £3

193 (247).—39 Elizabeth do. do.

William Shakspere, of Wroxhall, 34-7 Henry VIII., is probably William, husband of Agnes, who obtained a portion of John Shakspere's land there in 22 Henry VIII., and who was enrolled at Knowle 18 Henry VIII., together with John, (probably his brother), and Joan, his wife, of Rowenton ; and Richard (probably the Bailiff of Wroxall), and Alice, his wife, *née* Gryffyne.

There were certainly three Johns in succession at Rowington, *tempe* Henry VIII.; two were assessed 14-16 Henry VIII., one died at or before 22 Henry VIII., a second 25 Henry VIII., and a third was living 34-7 Henry VIII.

The second (or was it the third?) John Shakspere appears to have demised his lands in 24 Henry VIII. for sixty years to Alice Taylor, of Hanwell, in the County of Oxford, as appears by the Minister's account of Henry VIII. already mentioned.

Joseph Hunter, in his collections made after the publication of his "Illustrations," (Additional M.S. 24,500. B.M.), gives a rental of Rowenton, 2 Edward VI. Of course he does not state from whence he takes it. Amongst the free tenants at Lowston End was John Shakspere, paying 10s. 10d.; at Rowington End, John Shakspere (possibly the same or possibly another person) had land for which he paid 6s. 10d.; another rent payable by John Shakspere of 2s. for other land. At Molsowe End, Johanna Shaksper, widow, paid 3s. 8d. rent; a William Shaxper paid 2d. rent, and a Richard Shakspere is also mentioned. John Prickett at this date held part of the Stratford-on-Avon lands belonging to Rowenton. It would appear that Johanna Shakspere died 1557, for her will is recorded at Worcester, but unfortunately is lost. In 3 Elizabeth, Thomas Shaxsper held a messuage and one virgate of land in Lowston, late Thomas Cryer's, paying 10s. 10d. a year, being one of the fraternity; this was probably the land held by Johanna Shakspere in 2 Edward VI. and by John and Joan 18 Henry VIII. In Rowington End at the same date John Shakspere held a cottage and croft called the Twycroft, in Mond, late William Goodwin's, 2s. rent; and Richard Shakspere held a messuage, half a virgate of land and two parcels of mead, in Church End; rent 14s. It is curious that two Richard Shakspere's died this year 1560-1, Richard, of Snytterfield, the poet's grandfather, and Richard, the weaver, of Wroxall. The Roll following this if it could be found might give very valuable testimony.

The first-named John Shakspeare, according to the Court Rolls of 23 Henry VII. and 22 Henry VIII., had a wife named Elenor ; and there is a puzzling statement in the roll which apparently represents the Court next after the death of her husband, for a heriot is recorded to have been paid (though this is not certain, for a heriot was payable on surrender also) viz., the statement that she was named Cockes. She is described as a widow, late wife of John Shakspeare. Had she married a Mr Cockes between the date of John's death and of the surrender, who had also died, or was Mr. Cockes possibly then living ? She may have been the daughter of one Cockes. Now in 5 Henry VII.—only eighteen years before the grant from the Lady Isabella Shakspeare of the Wroxall land—one Richard Cockes was bailiff of Knowle (Court Rolls, P.R.O., Portfolio 207, No. 47) ; and we find at a later date that George Nash, of Old Stratford, married Maria, daughter of Edward Cox, of London ; and whilst his nephew, Thomas Nash, of Lincoln's Inn, married the Poet's granddaughter, Ann Nash, his sister, married William, son of Edward Cox, and Francisca Nash, a sister of George, married John Lane, of Stratford—another link between the Poet and Wroxall.

The second John Shakspeare, of Rowenton, had a wife Johanna, and they were members of the Guild of Knowle in 18 Henry VIII. He appears to have been dead in 2 Edward VI., for Johanna Shaxsper, widow, paid 3s. 8d. rent for land in Molsowe ; and the third John Shaxsper then paid a rent of 10s. 10d. for land at Lowston End. He appears to have died before 3 Elizabeth, for that year Thomas Shaxsper held the land at Lowston, paying 10s. 10d., the same rent. This is doubtless the Thomas Shakspeare of the Subsidies of 35-9 Elizabeth, and probably the same person mentioned in the Wroxall Court Rolls.

In Court Roll No. 37, Portfolio 207, for Edward VI. (no year given) Richard Shakspeare was on the jury for Hatton—a Court which apparently is in the Manor of Wroxall—and he

again appears on the jury in a Court held 12th April, 5 Edward VI. Presumably this is Richard, the bailiff, who afterwards resided at Snytterfield. We first hear of him there.

In No. 64 of the same series is a Court Roll for Rowington undated, but dated approximately by the authorities at the P.R.O., as 5 Elizabeth, "because it was found with papers of that date." It is, however, very clearly of the year 1557, because Thomas fil Roger Oldnal paid the heriot due upon his father's death, and Roger Oldnal's will is proved in the year 1557.

Juliana Lee was sued for not delivering a grant of a fishery to Thomas Atwood. This Thomas Atwood was the son of the son-in-law of Thomas Gryffyn, of Fenny Compton, who died in 1539, and whose sister married Richard Shakspere, of Wroxall; which Thomas Atwood apparently died at Stratford in 1543, bequeathing four oxen to Richard Shakspere, then in his keeping at Haseley.

Richard Saunders, Anthony Ludford, and Richard Brook are mentioned, also Laurence Shakespere and John Byrde, senior.

The only previous notice we have of Laurence Shakespere is in a Rowenton Subsidy Roll of 34 Henry VIII., and he is mentioned as a cousin in John Shakspere's will, 1574. John Byrde is mentioned in a Wroxall Subsidy Roll for 34 Henry VIII.; Nicholas Byrde was tenant of Wroxall Priory for the lands of the foundation in Rowington.

* Robert Shakspere and Robert Bucke are presented for non-suit; the former was probably then living in Tackbrook.

John Shakspere paid heriot for a messuage in Mowsley end of William Byrde; this John Shakspere was probably the second of the name, who died 22 Henry VIII., for we find in the time of Edward VI., Johanna Shakespere, widow, held land in Mowsley end, and 18 Henry VIII., John Shaksperc and Johanna his wife, were members of the Guild of Knowle.

Henry Medley, son and heir-apparent of George Medley, deceased, paid his heriot for land in Rowenton—a family of great interest to this enquiry, since the Griffins afterwards intermarried with them. This death also helps to date this Roll as 1557. George Medley dying that year.

William Hill was Deputy Senescal; he was probably half-brother of Mary Arden.

In No. 65 of the same series is a Court Roll, 1632, for Rowington, in which Thomas Shakspeare is presented.

In 1635 are the admissions of several tenants to the lands held of the Manor in Stratford-on-Avon.

1647, at a Court of the Queen's Majesty, (Henrietta Maria, Queen of King Charles I., who subsequently resided in William Shakspeare's house in Stratford whilst the Civil War was raging), Thomas Shakspeare pays a fine of 6s. 8d. for admission to lands surrendered by himself to himself and others.

1648 is a license to Margaret Shakspeare to demise lands for 21 years.

Tempe John Pickering, Lord Keeper, Thomas Shakspeare, of Rowington, and Maria, his wife, daughter and heir of William Mathews deceased, filed his bill in Chancery. John Mathews, father of William, was seized of a messuage in Rowington and Clendon, and of tenements in Hatton, Shrawley, Rowington, and Pinley. He was also styled alias Smith in some of the wills.

Hil. 16 Elizabeth. Hugo Walford, Quer, and Thomas Shakspeare, and Maria, his wife, defendants, of a cottage and five acres of land in Norton Curlew. Easter, 20 James I. Thomas Shakspeare, Quer, and John Hall, and Joyce, his wife, defendants, of twelve acres of land in Rowington, which were sold to the said Thomas Shakspeare in 41 Elizabeth.

Amongst the M.SS. in the Free Library of Birmingham is a fine, dated 7, Charles I., between Adrien Shakspere, Quer, and Thomas Green, and Anna, his wife, defendants, of four acres of meadow and twenty-six acres of pasture in Old Fillongley ; and there is a bond for £40 of Adrien Shakspere, of Meridon, yeoman, made to John Waring, of Bourton, which possibly has reference to the same transaction. There is another fine dated Easter, 26 Charles II., between Thomas Brearly, gentleman, and Thomas Shakspere, gentleman, Quer, and Martin Brearly, and Sarah, his wife, Ballard Townend and Maria, his wife, defendants, of a cottage and water-mill and nine acres of pasture in Fillongley and Arley.

No connection has as yet been traced between these members of the family ; but it is curious that we should here find the name of the great Englishman, Nicholas Breakspere, Pope Adrian IV., adopted as a Christian name by this family, and still more curious that the arms of the Pope are said to have been identical with those afterwards borne by the Poet.

Exchr. Q.R. Searches to pass beyond seas. No. 17 P.R.O., 13th June, 1632. Thomas Shakspere, æt 23 to pass to the low countries to serve as a soldier ; and 25th August, 1631, the same had license to go to Rotterdam, to serve as a soldier, æt 24. There is some error in the date or age, but the document does not explain it.

(The author is indebted for these two extracts to the courtesy of Mr. Noble, Record Agent).

It appears from the poet's will that he held land in Stratford, which was parcel of the Manor of Rowington ; and also, it appears, that he purchased some land there, also held of the same Manor, but it by no means follows that this is the same land. This purchase may merely have been of some additional land, the poet seemed fond of making additions to his purchases, and the other land may have been inherited by him from his grandfather, Richard of Haseley.

He does not appear by his will to make any disposition of this land, as he probably would do, if it were only that which he had acquired by purchase ; but he leaves to his daughter Judith an additional legacy of £50, upon condition of her surrendering her right in a copyhold tenement in Stratford, held of the Manor of Rowington ; so that this property, whatever it was, evidently descended to her at his death as one of coheir without any act of his disposition. The author was informed in answer to his inquiry, that the Court Rolls of Rowington, formerly preserved at Warwick, were burnt ; if, however, they should be in existence, they would assuredly give valuable evidence upon this interesting point.

Everything connected with Wroxall must be of the deepest interest to the Shakesperian student, seeing that here is the very cradle and home of the family for over two hundred years prior to the birth of the poet, whose father was doubtless baptised in this place, but unfortunately the Registers are lost for the period.

We know, too, that in 5 Edward IV., Richard Shakspeare, the first of the name of whom we have record, resided here, and held lands in connection with Ralf, his brother, in Baddesley Clinton. Probably he was father, or perhaps brother of the Lady Isabella Shakspeare, the first Prioress of Wroxall of this family, and he was probably grandsire of the last Prioress, the Lady Jane Shakspeare, who died at Haseley in 1570. His brother Ralf seems only to have left two daughters and co-heirs, who both married—although, of course, if he had a daughter Isabella she may have renounced her inheritance upon becoming Prioress. Ralf had a second wife named Isabella, but she could hardly be the Prioress, for he died as late as 1496. The Lady Isabella was Prioress long before the death of Ralf Shakspeare.

Unfortunately the Wroxall Registers only begin in 1586, and there is a terrible gap from 1604 to 1641, a rather unusual period for loss, from which it may be hoped that it may yet be

found hidden away, perhaps in the lumber-room of some old farmhouse or other in the parish itself. For so precious a record now that it is clear that the poet's family came from this place, it is to be hoped that a strict search may be made in the neighbourhood, and that, if possible, it may be recovered. It would be gratifying indeed to find a history of the family before they were exiled, and driven to take a settlement in Haseley.

There is a curious confusion of parishes. It would seem that Wroxall originally must have been in the parish, and Honour of Hatton, for the earliest legends of Wroxall speak (perhaps erroneously) of a Castle of that name having been founded by Hugh de Hatton. In the early Court Rolls of the Prioress, as well as in the Minister's Accounts, it is described as that of "Wroxhall or Hatton," and lands are held of it in Hampden Curlew, and Budbrook. The Parish Registers of Haseley are mixed up with those of Hatton, as if Hatton were the mother church; yet in a document to be mentioned presently, the town of Hatton is said to be in the parish of Budbrook. The Subsidy Rolls make no assessment for Hatton, but only for Budbrook, Haseley, and Wroxall separately.

WROXHALL PARISH REGISTERS BEGIN 1586
WITH:—

1586. June 5. Elena dau. of..... and Elizabeth Lane, baptd.
Luke son of Richard and Elenor Rogers, baptd.
Feb. 2. Wm. Andrews and Marie Phinnes, m.
1587. April 9. Nathaniel, son of James Woodams and Margaret his wife, baptd.
John, son of William Tomes and Alice his wife, baptd.
1588. Nathaniel, son of Richard and Anna Bird, baptd.
Dec. 9. Fraunces Shaxpered was buried.
1589. July 16. William Wherrett and Marie Webb, m.
1590. June 28. Marie, their daughter baptised.

- Aug. 30. William Wharton and Ioane Lane, m.
 Sep. 8. Edward Temple and Elizabeth Burgoyne, m.
 Feb. 9. William Stubbing and Margaret Woodham.
 1591. Aug. James Woodham, buried.
 Thomas Green, churchwarden.
 1592. Sep. 17. William, fil Alexr. Bird of Haseley, baptised
 at Wroxall.
 May 29. Nicolas Shaxper and Alice Edmunds, m.
 June 11. Edward Darmer and Isabel Lane, m.
 1593. Mar. 25. Peter, fil Nicolas and Alice Shaxper, baptised
 Nov. 28. Clement Throckmorton, of Haseley, and
 Elizabeth Ludford, of Wetherley, Gentm.,
 m. at Wroxall.
 1594. Nov. 17. Susannah, dau. of Nicolas and Alice Shaxper,
 baptised.
 1595. Sept. 17. Elizabeth ux. William Shaxper, buried.
 1596. Mar. 6. Thomas, son of Thomas Green and Judith
 his wife, baptised.
 Sep. 10. Cornelius, fil Nic. and Alice Shaxper,
 baptised.
 Feb. 24. Thomas Green and Judith Holm, married.
 Sep. 29. Philip Griffin and Katherine Wilkinson, m.
 at Wroxall.
 1597. Jan. 27. Elizabeth Hart, buried.
 June 19. Richard Bird, buried.
 1598. June 3. William White and Sarah Webb, married.
 Oct. 9. Ralf Little, buried.
 1599. Feb. 3. Annah, dau. of Nic. and Alice Shaxper,
 baptised.
 Sep. 4. John Burgoyne and Barbara Ludford, m.
 Nov. 20. John Hill and Joyce Woodall, m. at Wroxall.
 1600. June 15. Mary, dau. of John Burgoyne of Rowington
 and of Barbara his wife, baptised.
 Aug. 30. Anthony, fil Thomas Percival, baptised.
 April 9. Annah, dau. of Nic. and Alice Shaxper,
 bap. and bu.
 1601. July 19. John, fil John Hill of Rowington, baptised.
 1602. Oct. 10. Susannah, dau. of Clement Hoolyhock and
 Hannah his wife, baptised.
 1603. June 15. Hester, dau. of Nic. and Alice Shaxper,
 baptised.

- (No Registers from 1604 to 1641.)
1641. Peter Shakspeare, buried.
Mathew, fil Mathew Woodam and his wife,
baptised.
1642. Elizabeth, dau. of John Roe and Ann his
wife, baptised.
May 17. William Smith and Catherine Shakspere,
married.
1645. Sep. 25. Nicolas Shakspere, buried.
1648. Dec. 8. Mary, dau. of John and Mary Cook, baptised.
1665. May 16. Ralf Stokes and Margaret Shakspeare, m.
1667. May 11. Cathe, dau. of Ralf Stokes of Hatton,
deceased, and Margaret his wife, baptised.
1669. June 25. Eleanor Queeny of Beaushall, buried.
1670. Jan. 26. Robert Shakespeare and Ann Averno, m.
1678. Oct. 4. Jane, dau. of Robert Shakspeare the elder,
buried.
1681. Mar. 29. Robert, fil Richard Shakespeare and his wife,
baptised.
1704. June 8. Clement Throckmorton of Hazeley and Mrs.
Elizabeth Lucy of this parish, married.
1714. May 30. Ann, ux. Robert Shakespeare, buried.
1719. May 13. Robert Shakespeare, buried.
1748. Mathew Wise, Esq., of the Priory, Warwick,
and Finetta Holbeach of Warwick.
1779. The widow of Thomas Hales of Knowle
Hall, buried.

*The following Inventory is of great interest, from the number
of persons named in it who were connected with the Poet.*

1557. Nov. 26. The goods of Hugh Porter of Snytterfield,
prised by Thomas Robyns, Henry Colle,
William Parkes.
There was certain stuff of Hugh Porter's in
the house of Richard Mayde.
The debts that be owing to and from Hugh
Porter:—Thomas Burbury of Chipping
Dorset and Walter Feckington, £20.
William Hychenen, £10. Richard Shak-
spere of Snytterfield oweth unto Hugh
Porter of Snytterfield ye sum of 40s. Item
the executors of Robert Arden of Wilnecote
and Thomas Stringer of Berely, Daniel
Hall of Warwick, Edward Allway of Grove

Park. William Bott, £30. for the which he hath in mortgage of the land of the said Hugh Porter in the town of Hatton in the parish of Budbrook. Richard Shevelock of Priors Hardwick, £14. Bond by Robert Nicolls of Snytterfield and John Porter of Wychbold. Nearly all these persons and places are connected with the Shakspeare family.

1561. June 28. William Reve of Rowington by his Will gave a "chyle" sheep to Margaret Shaxspere (the first legacy bequeath).
He had 2 brothers, John and William Reve. Katherine, his wife, and Thomas, his son, Exors.
Overseers:—His brother John Reve, John Reve son of Alys Reve, and William Saunders the younger.
1561. June 15. Richard Shakysspeare of Rowenton, Weyver, Sons, William, Richard (under 23).
Mentions John and William Reve, his brothers-in-law.
T.—Richard Hatch, Richard Shakespere.
Proved 30th June, 1561.
Goods prized by John Shaxsper and Richard Saunders.
1565. Mar. 19. Will proved of Robert Shakspeare of Wroxall. Son Nicolas. Various legacies; amongst them he mentions silver spoons. Jone, wife. Daughters, Frances and Margaret. His brother Lone and brother Richard Yeman to be his Trustees. Debts owing by Nicolas Shakspeare and Robert Lythe. Goods prized by Nicholas Edwards, William Shaxspere, Edward Lone, Richard (son?), John Bird.

1557. Robert Shakspeare held land in Rowenton.

The place of this Robert Shakspeare in the pedigree is exceedingly puzzling, from his date, and his mention of his brother Lone we naturally recur to the surrender of Alice Lone to William Shakspeare of land in Wroxall in 22 Henry VIII. Possibly she was the widow of a Shakspeare who married a Lone before or afterwards, so that Shakspeare and Lone were of the half-blood. This relationship, recorded in the will, must have been of a later date, and, in that case, probably Robert

Shakspere was a son of William and Agnes who obtained the Wroxall property from Alice Lone ; the relationship, however, can only be guessed at.

1565. Feb. 10. Elizabeth. Bond upon the administration of the goods of Richard Shakspere of Snytterfield, in £100, made by John Shakspere of Snytterfield, Agricola, and Thomas Nicolls of Snytterfield, Agricola, John Shakspere being the administrator of the said Richard Shakspere.
1569. Dec. 25. John Pardu of Snytterfield. Sons : William, Thomas, and Harry. Mychel Gudryde, Mr. William Cokes, and Wylliam Shaxpere, overseers in the Will ; the names of Cokes and William Shaxpere are included at Snitterfield just as they both appear together on the Wroxall Court Rolls of 22 Henry VIII.
1570. William Weyle of Haseley. Alice, eldest daughter, wife of Nicholas Raybon. Isabel, wife ; children : Kenelm, Bartholomew and Clement, Joan and Elizabeth. Clement Throckmorton, John Deteritch, parson of Haseley. William Averell and my brother John Weyle, overseers.
1571. April 30. Thomas Yeton of Rowenton. John, his son ; eldest daughters : Mary, Alice, and Jane, 40 merks each. My wife's three sisters, Margery, Annis, and Mary. Thomas, my son, to have my free land in Hatton and Bewsall, which I bought of William Atwood of Tamworth, and Dorothy, his wife. Lease to John Reve the younger, then to remain to Anne, my daughter. Anthony Byrde, my sister Mary Crane, and Humphrey Crane of Warwick, with my wife Isabel, executors. Thomas Atwood and John Bennett, overseers. T.—Thomas Atwood, Thomas Ley, and George How. Goods prised by John Sadler, John Collett, and William Saunders. Proved 24th May, 1571.

Most of these persons are relatives and connections of the Shakspere family, and are mentioned in their wills or in their records.

1574. Dec. 15. John Shaxper of Wroxall, laborer, leaves his goods between Edward, his son, and

his wife, they to take his land if his landlord permits. Mentions his sister Ales, and a coffer belonging to his late father. His brother Woodam's children, 13s. 4d. each, in the hands of Thomas Rogers of Netherwood. His cousin Laurence Shaxper of Balsall; his brothers William Shaxper and Nicolas; daughter, Alice Windmiles, Godson, Thomas Mortiboys; George Tyler and James Woodham, executors. William Shaw, clerk, who attested his will, to have 2s. for his pains.

The goods were prised by George Tyler, James Woodhams, Edward Lane, John Birde, and Richard Underhill, at the sum of £30 3s. 2d. This will has been overlooked probably because the Testator is described as a laborer; but this term merely meant that he was a tenant-farmer (*Agricola*), and had no land of his own. At the suppression of the Priory, the Manor and lands of Wroxhall passed to the Burgoynes, who seem to have been good landlords to the old tenants. In 34 Henry VIII. (about 30 years previously), we find amongst the Priory tenants then passing under the Burgoyne lordship, Richard and William Shakspeare, William Lane, Richard Woodham, and Richard Underhill, John Birde and John Rogers,—six out of seven of these names are mentioned in John Shaxper's will,—proof that the Burgoynes were merciful landlords. The Underhills we afterwards find selling land to the Poet himself.

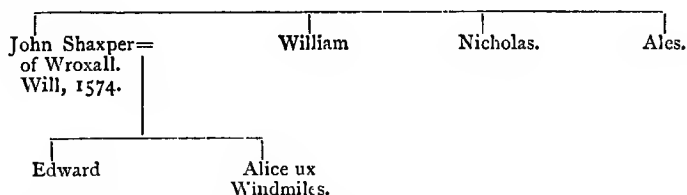
The inventory did not display anything like wealth; but the painted cloths, stated to be in the hall, shewed a refinement which one could not expect to find in a mere laborer's cottage, but which very naturally remained with a despoiled tenant of the Reformation. Of live stock, there is recorded 4 keine, 2 heifers, 3 young beasts, one bay mare, 9 sheep, 2 store pigs, and 3 geese. In the Hall was a tableboard with forms and benches, 2 cheres, 2 stools, one coperor, and 2 painted cloths, priced at 10s.; brass and pewter, 32s.; one flock bed, 2 mattresses, one bed hitting on blankets, 3 twithes, 5 peyre of

sheets, with the rest of the linen cloths, 20s.; 2 bolsters, with painted cloths, 3 bedsteads, 7 cofers, with other things.

Iron ware, one broch, one cobered, one gridiron, a potte hanging, and a fringe paine.

The admirers of Halliwell Phillips may observe that there were evidently towels and table-cloths, although not specifically mentioned, and doubtless in Robert Arden's inventory these things were taken in the lump in the same manner.

This will establishes the following pedigree, and the sister Alice may well have been the widow of Richard, the Bailiff of Wroxhall :—



In the same year, John Shaxper, of Rowington, made his will. He was not so wealthy as his cousin of Wroxall, for his goods were only prised at £8:6:8; but he was better off in some respects, for he possessed lands at Shrawley called Madywattons, which he entailed upon George, his son, with remainder to his daughter Annis, to whom also he gave 20 marks upon her marriage. He bequeathed £20 to Thomas, his son.

Eleanor was his wife; Nicholas and Thomas, his brothers. He mentions his Aunt Ley, the midwife, to whom he gave a bushel of corn. Perhaps the term *aunt* is not intended to designate relationship. He left legacies to Elizabeth, Cley, and Catherine Coop. His goods were prised by Richard and Thomas Saunders, Thomas and Richard Shaxper, William Cooper and George Gunold. Included in his goods were bees and painted cloths. John Shaxper, of Wroxhall (1574), had a cousin

Laurence Shaxper, of Balsall. The only Lawrence known to the author is in the Rowington Court Roll of 1557 before mentioned, in which John Shakspeare paid for a heriot on William Bird's property in Mowsley End. This Balsall is probably a mistake for Busall, where some of the Haseley family lived and had property, Nicolas Shakespere dying there in 1609. This will is interesting from another fact—it is the only instance of an Alice Shakespere having been found in Warwickshire at or about this period, this sister Alice possibly being Alys Griffin. It is valuable in showing that Agnes Woodhams was his sister-in-law, which identifies her again as wife of the Richard, who, 15 Henry VIII., had a lease with Richard Shakspeare of land in Haseley, three years before she became a member of the Guild of Knowle.

The relationship with Lawrence, again, shows the connection of the Haseley branch with Rowington.

Richard Shakspeare, of Rowington, the Elder. Will dated 6th September, 1591. Sister Turner. Sons—John (who had a son Thomas), Roger, Thomas, William; and daughter Dorothy, wife of Jenks. (Thomas Green, of Little Alne, will 1580, mentions his sister Emma Jenks and her son Edward)

Richard Shakspeare, of Rowington. Will dated 13th November, 1613. Wife Elizabeth. Sons—1st, Richard (who had issue—Thomas, William, Richard, and John); 2nd, John; 3rd, William (who had issue—John); and 4th, Thomas.

Thomas Shakspeare, of Mowsley and Rowington. Will, 13th October, 1613. Wife Annis, sister of John Scott. Had issue—1st, John (who had issue—William, died 1690, and John, died 1710); 2nd, Thomas; 3rd, Richard; and daughters—Elenor, Joan and Annis.

William Shakspeare, of Wroxall, husbandman. Will dated 17th November, 1609. Left brothers and sisters not named.

10th May, 1590. Will of Richard Saunders, of Wroxall, mentions John Anelie, his daughter's son; Elizabeth, his wife; brother, William Saunders; Margaret, daughter of his sister Dorothy. Overseers—John Bird and his brother, Peter Saunders.

These few wills are given, but it is not pretended that the author has had time or opportunity to make an exhaustive search, the records of the Probate Court of Worcester being in terrible disorder. There is, indeed, a Calendar of the Wills which is fairly accurate, but it gives, with few exceptions, no places. There is no Calendar of Administrations or Inventories, so that much genealogical information is lost and the labour of getting at the wills is immense. The late Sir Thomas Phillipps has left a Calendar of the Wills, now in the Probate Office, which he must have made from the wills themselves, for in many cases the residences of the testators are given. But nothing can exceed the barbarous treatment of the records. They are generally in fair condition except on the outside edge of some of them, which is eaten away as if by damp; and as a very large number of the inventories have only the name on the top or outside, and it has been worn away, they are absolutely worthless in the majority of cases. The whole documents for a year are filed on a strong cord—to the utter destruction of a number of them—wills, inventories, and bonds. Genealogists will be delighted to learn that scores and hundreds of marriage bonds are included in these bundles, all written on parchment and generally in an excellent condition, for the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and possibly much earlier, it is extremely rare to find them. The only drawback as regards these bonds is the difficulty to pick them out; and this difficulty probably accounts for the failure of Shaksperian students to give anything like a fair account of this family, or to find the administration bond of the poet's grandfather, Richard Shakspere of Snytterfield.

These records give a fair account of the locality of the Shakspere family in the 15th century, and as all their places were within the ancient bounds of the Forest of Arden, and so many of them being archers, it may be fairly concluded that they came of an old forest family. The first entry given in the Register of the Guild of Knowle is in fact undated, and that Register is very irregularly transcribed, the Transcriber apparently having made the entries as certain rolls (some dated and

some not) were handed to him. It is, moreover, unreliable even where it is dated ; for instance, the Lady Isabella Shakspeare has prayers offered for her soul as if she were dead (though this is not absolutely conclusive, for at times prayers were offered for the souls of the living), in the 17th Henry VII., and she was very clearly alive in the 23rd of this king ; because the Rolls (if they are free from error) prove that she held her Court in that year. The entry of Edward and Joys Griffin, of Berkswell, in 1500, is twice repeated, and its testimony therefore cannot very strictly be relied on, for the spelling of Joyce and of their residence is varied. And there is another difficulty in this enquiry—the name of Woldich is unknown. Dugdale apparently did not know it, but he gives one very similar—Oldich, which probably is the same place. In describing the Lordship of Balsall, the second place in point of date where Shaksperes are to be found, in 1486 and 1 Henry VII., he states :—"From Oldich Corner Westward by Wroxall and Honely Lordships on the South and South-East Corners, the Lordship of Berkswell East and North-East, Lordships of Hampton-in-Arden and Knowle, North North-West and West, Badesley and Wroxall South-West and South-East unto said Corner of Oldich." The Shaksperes, therefore, after they left Baddesley Clinton, settled apparently in the 'Wroxall Corner of Balsall, which again is very near to Rowenton.

This, almost the oldest abode of the family, is of great interest, not only for the Shakspeare, but the Griffyn family first settled here. Balsall originally belonged to the Knights Hospitallers, and though, of course, seized by the rapacious King Henry VIII., was by him given with Rowington in dower to Katherine Parr ; who, poor lady, enjoyed it but a short time, though she just escaped murder at the hands of her august husband, yet probably she died from the shock of the honour of his alliance. Queen Mary was about to restore it to the Hospitallers when she, too, died.

Rowington also was held by the Church, having been given very early to the Abbey of Reading in Berkshire. It is situated

on the western side of the brook that comes from Wroxall Park, and on the eastern side of one which comes from Kingswood, rising in Baddesley Clinton in the Ferrars' Park, one of them flowing eventually into the Humber, and the other into the Severn. This land, therefore, being upon the very backbone of England, and the climate being pure and bright, is well calculated to produce the highest state of health and intellect.

Rowington itself has a very commanding position overlooking, as it were, the whole district of the Forest. The church is remarkably fine, built in the cruciform shape, and more like a smaller cathedral than a village church in the midst of a forest. One is tempted to doubt whether Sir William Dugdale has collected its true history, so very remarkable and beautiful is its site and position. There is a very curious well in the churchyard, no doubt in old times a Holy Well, and the offerings of the pious for graces received may possibly account for the grandeur of the church. It is needless to say that, in these good Protestant and scientific days, pilgrims do not drink at this well; but it is at least gratifying to be able to relate that it is not wholly useless, the water being of service in cleansing the Rector's carriage-wheels. Perhaps when the great American people come here in crowds to view the cradle of the Shakspeare race, they, being a polite people, may turn it to better and more fitting purposes. It is curious to find a well at the very summit of a hill; possibly it is an ancient artesian well.

In 5 Elizabeth, William Skinner and Alice, his wife, with Anthony, their son, had a grant of land in the Manor. The Lordship formerly was very extensive, including Wigston, in Leicestershire, and many adjacent places.

John Hill, Bailiff of Rowenton, who is recorded to have been good to the poor, was buried here; but the date on his tomb is gone. He was possibly Agnes Arden's first husband.

John Beaufitz farmed the Manor of Balsall under the Knights Hospitallars. He died 27 Henry VII., possessed of it.

There were families of Shakspeare seated, apparently, at Berkswell, Barson, and Balsall, which were all close together in the Forest of Arden.

The Knowle Register mentions a Thomas and Alice, of Balsall, in 1 Henry VII ; and Alice, and for the soul of Thomas, 3 Henry VIII. Subsidy Roll, 192 (134), 16 Henry VIII., gives Ralf Shakspeare, of Barkswell.

193 (154), 35 Henry VIII. John Shakeshafte, 4d., for Balsall.

193 (179), 38 Henry VIII. Ralf Shakspeare, for Barson and Escot.

Court Roll, Portf. 207, No. 10. Rad Shakspeare on jury for Berkswell, 11 Nov., 4 Edward VI., and 23 April, 5 Edward VI.; and (No. 9), 1 Edward VI., Ralf Shakspeare was on the jury for Barson, and obtained seizin of two parcels of land, one lying in Lupton Meadows and the other in Barston Broadmeadow, called Strongdale, of the grant of Clement Fisher, deceased, his son Thomas consenting. At the same Court, Ralf Shakspeare, and Bridget, his wife, and Elizabeth Bullery, daughter of Bridget, surrendered land in Barston called Stocking, lying between Morcott Wood and Bradnock Mersh, to the use of Thomas Mersh.

2 Edward VI., John Shakeshaft was on the jury for Balsal. Subsidy Roll, 193 (109), 13 Elizabeth Berkswell. Ralf Shakspeare, 20s. land.

John Shakspeare of Wroxall, by will dated 1574, mentions his cousin Laurence Shakspeare of Balsall ; the subsidy of 34 Henry viii mentions a Laurence Shakspeare at Rowington, who is probably the same person as the Laurence mentioned in Court Roll No. 64, Portfolio 207 as of that place.

Thomas Shaxsper, Shoemaker of Warwick, will dated 1577, had land held of the Manor of Balsall. Left issue William, Thomas, John, and Joan ux Francis Ley, perhaps related to the Aunt Ley of John Shakspeare's will.

A William Shakespere, who was drowned in the Avon, 6th June, 1579, was probably the son of this Thomas, since he was buried at St. Nicholas, Warwick.

1593, Thomas Shakespere, and Florence, his wife, with Alice Grace, her sister, sued Thomas Grace and John Harding for certain lands, place not mentioned, settled by Thomas Grace, their father, deceased. 1597, Thomas Shakespere fined with Henry Ferrars for 2 messuages, 1 orchard, 1 loft, 4 gardens and 4 acres of pasture in Warwick, for £80.

Another family of Shakespere resided at Packwood.

The Knowle Guild records Christopher Shakespere, and Isabella, his wife, of Packwood, 3 Henry VIII.

Subsidy Roll, 193 (183), 3 Edward VI., shews the same Christopher assessed for goods at Packwood to the amount of £10; and the same is repeated in 193 (190), 2 Edward VI.

At Lichfield there are several Shakspere Wills, one a Will of Christopher Shakspere, of Packwood, dated 31st August, 1551, and proved 15th August, 1558, in which he mentions his wife, Isabel, his sons, Rich, William, (who was to have a copyhold house called Hancoxe), Roger, Christopher and John, and daughters Alice and Agnes, William Featherstone, his son-in-law.

1558, Elizabeth Shakspere, of St. Werbergs, Derby, mentions her sister Grace, and her cousins, Alice Shepherd and Jane Firebrace.

1605, August 2nd, Roger Shakspere, Tachbrook, mentions in his Will his son John and his wife Alice.

1605-6, March 18th, William Shakspere, of Coventry, shoemaker, mentions his wife.

1610, April 26th, Thomas Shakspere, of Packington Parva, mentions his wife, Philip, son George, to have his lands at

Coalshill, sons, Thomas and Andrew, daughter, Alice, wife of Thomas Croft.

There was a settlement of Shaksperes at Hagley and Oldswinford, Worcestershire, probably because a branch of the Griffins, of Long Ichington, settled there. John Shakspere married, at Hagley, Sarah, daughter of Francis Greaves, of Great Whitley, and had issue Sarah and Elizabeth, both baptised at Oldswinford. Edward Shakspere married Bridget Hatton there 1695. She died 1699; and Ann Shakspere married John Padget there in 1697.

CHAPTER VII.

HASELEY.

IT is very difficult to ascertain where Richard Shakspeare, who was Bailiff of Wroxall, resided before, as well as immediately after, he was ejected from that office. It is rather a curious fact, although it may be a mere coincidence, that he was superseded by one John Hall, who was appointed 16 Henry VIII. to the office. The origin of Dr. Hall, who married the poet's favourite daughter, has never been ascertained. It would be strange, indeed, if it should turn out that he was descended from this gentleman. The recipient of the office was pretty sure to be a Catholic at that date, for the new religion was hardly promulgated, and the peculiar and novel doctrines of the King had not yet been defined; that arch-heretic Cranmer, as Shakspeare calls him, had not yet poisoned the old faith with his heresies. Indeed, for some time after King Henry had obtained his divorce through the insidious counsels of Cranmer, not finding such perfect bliss in his new marriage as he had fondly anticipated (unpleasant rumours of Miss Bullen's prenuptial amours with grooms and others having shocked the good King's modesty), he seemed inclined to go back to the old faith; and would have done so, doubtless, could

he have restored to the Church and the poor the property he had stolen from them. It was touching to see the anxious, but still conscientious monarch, burning a couple of heretics at the same stake and in the same fire—the one for denying, and the other for affirming the truth of the new doctrines. There is nothing ridiculous in this, for the King was in doubt himself, and Henry could hardly be expected to defer the burning till he had settled his doctrines, though one of the poor creatures might have been saved, if indeed that would have been of any importance to him.

It is well known that Dr. Hall was a sincere Catholic, though, courtier-like, he affected the fashionable religion; but he was deeply trusted by the Warwickshire Catholics for all that, and was the physician of most of the best Catholic families in that county.

It is very probable that, originally, Richard Shakspeare, the Bailiff, resided at Hampton Carlew, where the Priory of Wroxall had property, and in which Hatton is said to have been situated. We find a Richard Shakspeare assessed there for a considerable sum in 16 Henry VIII.,—the very year his successor was appointed to his office. His name does not appear for that place in the previous assessment of 14 and 15 Henry VIII, nor does it afterwards, although for a short time we find Antonio Shakspeare there (?the son of John and Eleanor of 23 Henry VII.). In 34 Henry VIII., there is a Richard Shakspeare assessed at Rowenton for a substantial sum, but no Richard at Wroxhall at this period. When the old monastic lands were sold to Richard Andrews and Leonard Chamberlain, a Richard Shakspeare was tenant, and not in the position of Bailiff. He appears to have held a messuage and divers crofts by copy of Court Roll and payment of a heriot, and a rent of 7s.9d. William Shakspeare held a messuage, &c., paying 10s. and a heriot, probably that which was passed on the surrender of Elenor Cocks and Antonio Shakspeare, in 22 Henry VIII., which it will be seen was at a rental of 10s. Unfortunately the

rental of the land surrendered to John Rabon is illegible, or it might be seen whether he was the son of John and Agnes. At this date, Richard Shakspeare held the bailiff's fee, value 40s., and Alice Taylor, of Hanwell, held the farm, which had been John Shakspeare's in 25 Henry VIII., by virtue of an indenture dated just previously. But in this same roll there is a note that at Haseley, Richard Wodham and Richard Shakspeare had at farm, under Indenture dated 5th June 15 Henry VIII., three crofts and a grove at 8s. rental. In all probability this free tenant was the bailiff.

Fortunately, the Haseley Registers begin very early (1538), though not early enough for the baptism of Richard Shakspeare's children (supposing them to have been born there). They, however, contain some very interesting information relative to the Wroxall Shakspeare's, which shews an intimate connection with them. A branch of the Throckmorton family were settled at Haseley; they were closely connected by marriage with the Gryffyns—Margaret Throckmorton, of Coughton, having married Ryce Gryffyn, of Bickmarsh, son of Sir Edward, the Attorney General, and her sister Elizabeth was the wife of Sir Henry Griffith, of Wigmore—distant cousins (see pedigree hereafter), but both in the male line in direct descent from the ancient Kings of Wales. Ryce Gryffyn, as it will be shown presently, had purchased much property from the Throckmortons, the Cloptons, Coombs, and other relations of the Shaksperes, and some of it he had disposed of to the Cookes, their relatives. Both families of Gryffyn and Throckmorton (the latter are to this day) were strong Catholics, and very naturally they would afford protection to the inmates of the Priory of Wroxall, which was the nearest religious house to their residence at Haseley, not being, in fact, more than a couple of miles from it.

There is a very beautiful Altar Tomb in Hasely Church, erected to the good Clement Throckmorton and his wife, who was a Neville of the Earl of Warwick's family. Some of the brasses are still preserved, and the present Vicar of the

parish has most carerully restored them. The church itself is very curious, and the crypt or chapel in which the Throckmorton monument is placed seems hardly to have been a portion of it, but has the appearance of a private house added to it, possibly the Throckmortons who were strict Catholics managed in some way to screen off their chapel from the body of the church and there held the Catholic services. The excellent Vicar of Bray winking at the proceeding and making up for this neglect of his services, and his own loss of dignity by an excellent dinner at the Manor House. Probably many of the so called Protestant clergy at that period were secret Catholics, and only took office for the sake of the emoluments. It was of course at the Throckmorton Chapel that the poor old Prioress of Wroxall would say her prayers and tell her beads. The Vicar seems to be of opinion that the present vicarage was the old Shakspeare residence. Curiously, although he was unaware of the connection of the Shaksperes with his parish, he has some very remarkable relics of the family. One, an embossed portrait of the Poet, beaten out in brass which he purchased of one of the old Shakspeare families in the forest. There were descendents of the Shaksperes living in Haseley until quite recently, of poor condition in life, but by no means common personages. Probably many relics of the family may still be found in the old farmhouses about, and as this ground has never been suspected to be connected with the Poet's family and our American cousins are sure to flock here, and at Rowington there may be a good opening for an intelligent relic manufacturer.

It is very interesting to read in the Registry under date 21st October, 1571, "*Mortua et sepulta erat Domina Jane (Jane Shakspeare) aliquando una monicarū Wroxall;*" living here as near as she could to her beloved Priory. William Shakspeare, the Poet, was only seven years old when she died, but probably she saw and blessed him. Here, too, under this roof (Richard Shakspeare's) peacefully passed the remainder of his days, the poor monk, Roger Shackspeare, of the Monastery of Bordesley,

who, upon being expelled by King Henry VIII., received the munificent sum of 100s. He seems to have been appointed (?) in May, 1547, just after the tyrant Henry had breathed his last, in the Rectory of Flavell Flyford. A Robert (in the calendars called Richard) Gryffyn died there in 1538; so, possibly, it was through the influence of that family that he obtained a refuge there; but he was, probably, too old to bear up under his altered circumstances, and like so many of his brethren he could not endure the sight of the misery around him; and here, in Haseley, he returned to the home, or very near it, of his family. Here, let us hope, protected by kind friends and relations he breathed his last. Poor Queen Mary died this year; perhaps this blow to Catholic hopes finally killed him. The poet was unborn then, and he never knew his grandfather, but surely his father or sweet Mary Arden would relate all these sad histories to him, and although they seem to have failed to affect his spirits when he was young, in his later years they helped him to produce that noble play based on those troublous events—King Henry VIII. Surely, too, this helps to account for his deep-rooted hatred of Queen Elizabeth; so deeply seated was it, and so bitter, that even the great souled poet was unable to forget it after she was dead; and perhaps in that marvellous defence of Wolsey put into the mouth of his kinsman Griffin, he was unconsciously, or very likely consciously, condemning himself for his want of true charity, trying to do good to those who had done such wrong to his kindred, and to all around him, and to the religion in which, spite of the head of the Church, he had been reared so faithfully.

The Registers of Haseley contain the following entries, which are taken from a transcript made by Mr. Richard Savage, the Librarian of Shakespere's birthplace. He has examined the registers of some 90 Warwickshire parishes, to which, with the greatest liberality, he gave the author full access. He is indeed one of the few true scholars who have laboured in this field of literature, no one else having done a tithe of the solid work done by Mr. Savage.

FROM THE HATTON REGISTER.

This register consists of a few leaves bound up irregularly as to date, and it certainly includes the registers for the adjoining parish of Haseley, in which the Shaksperes resided, and in which Richard Shakspere, the Bailiff of Wroxhall, obtained a lease, in conjunction with Richard Woodham and Agnes his wife, probably his daughter and son-in-law, in 15 Henry VIII.

- 1543. Jan. 30.—Elizabeth Queeny buried.
- 1588. April 29.—Alexander and Margeria Pearkes married.
Feb. 16.—Elizabeth, dau. of Job and Dorothe Throckmorton baptised.
- 1589. Jan. 6.—Wm. Shakspeare and Barbara Stiffe married.
- 1591. Dec. 12.—Thomas Holiocke and Ann Woodham married..
- 1593. Dec. 4.—Nich. Woodham and Mary Knight married.
Mar. 25.—Peter, son of Nicolas and Alice Shakspere, baptised.
Oct. 21.—A son of Wm. Shakspere born dead.
- 1594. June 16.—Job, son of Job and Dorothe Throckmorton, baptised.
- 1596. March 14.—Susannah, dau. of Wm. Shakspere, gentleman, and Barbara, baptised; and buried 6 March, 1597.
- 1598. July 23.—Katherine, dau. of Wm. and Barbara Shakspere, baptised.
Oct. 22.—Josiah, son of William Webb, of Hatton, bap.
(As this entry refers to Hatton as a strange parish, the Register up to this date is probably that of Haseley. The Throckmortons were certainly of Haseley parish, and so were several of the families enumerated in this Register.
- 1610. Feb.—Barbara, wife of Mr. William Shakspere, buried.
- 1600. Feb. 12.—Job Throckmorton buried.
- 1607. — William Pagett and Catherine Throckmorton married.
March 3.—Fisher, son of Sir Clement Throckmorton, baptised.
- 1558. — Roger Shakspere buried.
(This is probably the old Priest of Bordesley.)

1570. April 4.—Isabel uxor Thomas Shakspere, formerly wife of John Tybotes, buried.
 Nov. 5.—Katherine Shakspere, filia Nicolas Shakspere, baptised.
1571. Oct. 21.—Mortua et sepulta erat Domina Jana (Jane Shakspeare) aliquando una monicarum Wraxall.
 (This was doubtless the Prioress of that house.)
1607. Dec. 26.—Nicholas Shaksper, of Busall, buried.
 Jan. 26.—Elizabeth Shaxper, of Busall, buried.
 (Busall is in the parish of Hatton).
 Feb. 4.—Nicholas Cook, of Shrowley, buried.
1608. Aug. 27.—John Wherrit, of Busall, buried.
1606. Sep. 21.—Thomas Shaxper, buried.
1539. July 6.—John, son of Richard Cookes, baptised.
 Jan. 27.—John, son of William Cookes, baptised.
1540. May 25.—Edward, son of William Queeney, baptised.
1555. Oct. 3.—Johanna, dau. of Thomas Webb, baptised.
1593. Sep. 8.—Thomas, son of Nich. and Elizabeth Shakspere, baptised.
1579. Jan. 6.—Elizabeth, dau. of same, baptised.
1608. Aug. 28.—Marie, dau. of Thomas Shaxsper, baptised.
1610. April 24.—Francis Cookes and Katherine Townend married.
1612. Jan. 20.—John Hastings and Susanna Shaxper married.
1638. May 29.—Henry Knibb and Anna Philips, both of Busall, married.

It is to be hoped that some one capable will take an interest in the Hatton Registers, out of respect for the poet's family; they ought to be properly edited. There can be no doubt that either these Registers for the two parishes of Hasely and Hatton have been improperly intermixed, or that one of them is dependent upon the other, and, in all probability, it is Hasely that is the mother Church, and they properly belong to that parish. This is the most likely, seeing that Hasely was the capital of the Throckmortons lesser Barony.

Although it is impossible and idle to follow and point out all the errors and fallacies of the great Shaksperian

authorities (Mr. French has done this gently and almost pleasantly), yet there is one pernicious error which, left unnoticed, might cause great confusion. It has been roundly stated, and even Mr. French repeats the error (though he vouches Mr. Hunter for his authority), that John Shakspeare, who was dead before 34 Henry VIII., held the Haseley property which had been granted to Richard Woodams and Richard Shakspeare in 15 Henry VIII., just after the subsidy of 14th and 15th of that King, and which they allege had been held prior to 34 Henry VIII. by John Shakspeare, who was then described as the late tenant, and was very probably dead. This, from the note taken by the author, is a mistake. The property referred to as that late of John Shakspeare was certainly that of the John who died 25 Henry VIII., but no reference whatever is made to the Haseley land as having been in his tenure. And in a terrier of the 28th of Henry VIII., made after the decease of this John, Richard Shakspeare was certainly then living at Haseley, and he continued to be tenant in conjunction with Richard Woodham, and from that place probably he at the same time held land in Snitterfield.

The following Haseley fines are of interest ;—

M. 38 Henry VIII. —Nicolas Byrde sold land to Thomas Ride, in Haseley, Bewsall and Rowenton.

Hil. 12 Elizabeth.—Clement Throckmorton fined, with Thomas Gryffyn, for land in Cotton, Warwick.

M. 12 and 13 Elizabeth.—Humphrey Crane fined, with Thomas Lucy, for land in Haseley. The Cranes were a Kidderminster family, closely allied by marriage to the Griffins of that place. Humphrey himself resided at Warwick. See Thos. Yeton's will, 1571, whose sister he married.

Pasc. 44 Elizabeth.—Clement Throckmorton sold land to Clement Fisher, in Haseley, Hatton and Shellersly.



CHAPTER VIII.

SNITTERFIELD.

HAVING brought out as many facts as possible relative to the history of the families of Wroxall and Rowington, and of Hazeley, we now come to the parish of Snitterfield, in which, unquestionably, the poet's father and grandfather held property. It is, however, probable that neither of them resided there, at least for any length of time; though it is certain that Richard Shakspeare (the bailiff of Wroxall) settled there for a time when he was ejected from Wroxall, and he certainly died there in 1561.

The connection of the Shaksperes with Snitterfield began at a very early period. Richard Shakspeare was tenant (probably of the Arden family) for land there, as is proved by the Warwick Court Rolls to be presently mentioned, at some date between the 17th and the 20th Henry VIII., at the exact period when Richard Shakspeare lost the position of bailiff to the Priory of Wroxall; but it would hardly seem that he resided there at that time, though it is quite possible that he did so:

The first charter of interest is a grant of two parts of six parts of certain lands there to Thomas Arden and Robert his son.

(No. ... Stratford-on-Avon Corporation Charters).

Henry VII. John Mayow, of Snitterfield, granted to Robert Throckmorton, Esq.; Thomas Trussel, of Bittesley; Roger Reynolds, of Henley-in-Arden; William Wood, of Woodham; Thomas Arden, of Wilmecote; and Robert Arden, his son; certain land at Snitterfield. Thomas Clopton, of Snitterfield, and John Porter, of the same, being his attorneys to deliver seizin.

We are indebted to the Court Rolls in the P.R.O. for an account of the rents, etc., of the spoliated College of the Blessed Mary the Virgin, at Warwick, from the years 7 to 30 Henry VIII., a sufficient time, fortunately, to cover the period and to give the necessary information relative to the Shakspeare and Arden families.

(Portfolio 207, No. 88). In 17 Henry VIII. Thomas Arden is presented for owing suit of Court. The next Court was held upon Hokday (that is rent day), 20 Henry VIII., when Richard Shakspeare is first mentioned on the Rolls, being presented for not doing suit of Court, which probably arose from his residence being elsewhere. This occurred again in the 22nd Henry VIII. In the 25th year, Richard Shakstaffe and Robert Arden were presented for the same cause of non-suit, and the latter for some trouble about fencing property against John Palmer's land. No doubt this Richard Shakstaffe, was in fact, Richard Shakspeare. Hokday, 30 Henry VIII. Robert Arden and Richard Shakspeare were again presented for non-suit of Court, and the latter also for some trouble about his fences between the lands of Thomas Palmer and himself.

This was not the only property of the Ardens in Snitterfield, as the following charter proves:—

(No. 428, Corporation of Stratford Charters.)

1st October, 21 Henry VIII. John Palmer of Snitterfield, son and heir of John Palmer and Elizabeth, his wife, daughter of Thomas Hervye, granted to Robert Arden a tenement, etc., in Snitterfield, next

a tenement of Robert Harding's. T— Richard Hawe, of Warwick, gentleman ; Richard Fisher, sub-bailiff of Warwick ; William Holbache ; John Parker, of Grove Park ; Walter Nicolson ; John Townend ; and Richard Maydes.

The next deed is the first evidence of Richard Shakspeare's residence at Snitterfield, if, indeed, it really proves it. He may only have farmed land there.

No. 430. 17th July, 4 Edward VI. Robert Arden grant to Adam Palmer, of Aston Cantlowe, and Hugh Porter, of Snytterfield, lands there, in the tenure of Richard Shakespere, in trust for himself and Agnes, his then wife, for their lives and the life of the longer liver ; with remainder as to one third part to his daughter Agnes, then the wife of Thomas Stringer, late wife of John Hewyns, formerly of Berely, deceased ; one third to his daughter Johanna, wife of Edward Lambert, of Burton-super-le-Heath ; and the third part to his daughter Catherine, wife of Thomas Etkins, of Wilmington.

Hil. 1 and 2 Philip and Mary. Thomas Arden fined with John Roper for land in Tonworth, Langley, Berwood, and Stratford-on-Avon ; and Trin. 4 and 5 Philip and Mary, Richard Smith fined with him for land in Sutton and Water Orton.

24th November, 1556. Robert Arden made his will, which was proved 17th December following, by his daughters Alice and Mary. He left his lands, called "Asbies," to his daughter Mary, to his wife Agnes a sum additional to her jointure in Snitterfield.

26th November, 1557. Richard Shakespeare is returned as indebted to the late Hugh Porter, of Snitterfield, in the sum of 40s. ; and the executors of Robert Arden and Thomas Stringer, of Bereby, are also found indebted to the same.

31st August, 1558. Richard Shakspere attested the will of Henry of Snitterfield.

15th September following, he prised goods of Richard Maydes, of Snitterfield, and 1st June, 1560, he prised goods of Henry Cole of that place. He died 1560-1 (date unknown, but either in January, or prior to the 11th February, 1561), his goods were administered by John, his son ; Thomas Nicols being joined with him in the bond of that date.

John Shakspeare is then described as of Snytterfield, Agricola. It may be noted that Mr. Nicolls was overseer of the will of Thomas Griffin, of Fenny Compton.

1569. Wylliam Shakspeare, with Mychel Gudrydge and Mr. William Cokes prised the goods of John Pardu, of Snytterfield. It is worth noting that there is a tradition, recorded by Jordan, that the poet's great grandfather was named William.

(No. 429, Stratford Deeds.)

21st May, 2 Elizabeth. Lease from Agnes Arden, of Wilmcote, widow, to Alexander Webb of 2 messuages, with a cottage and a yard-and-a-half of land, in Snitterfield, in the occupation of Richard Shakespere, John Henly, and John Hargreave for 40 years, at a yearly rent of 40s.

Memorandum of assignment by Robert Webb, of same premises to William Cookes, of Snitterfield, yeoman. This name Cookes, or Cokes, is suggestive of that of Cockes, by which the wife of John Shakspeare, of Rowington, called herself in 18, Henry VIII. Possibly this William Cookes was her second husband, or her son.

No. 430. 1576. Assignment by Edward Cornwall, of Snitterfield, and Mary, his wife, to Robert Webb, of Snitterfield, of their interest in the same lands.

1579. John Shakspeare and Mary, his wife, conveyed their interest in Snitterfield to Robert Webbe; and by fine, Pasc. 22 Elizabeth, between Robert Webb, Quer. and John Shakspeare and Maria, his wife, defts. of one sixth of two parts of 2 messuages and 2 gardens, 2 orchards, 60 acres land, 10 acres mead, and 30 acres heath in Snitterfield, which Agnes Arden held in dower of the inheritance of the said Mary Shakspeare.

There cannot be a doubt that this curious fraction, $\frac{1}{6}$ of 2 parts is the portion of Mary Arden, as one of the 6 daughters and co-heirs of Robert Arden; of two parts of the land conveyed by John Mayow to Thomas Arden and Robert, his son, (Mary's father), in the time of Henry VII.

Pasc. 21 Elizabeth. Thomas Stringer, John Stringer, Ardistran Stringer, Edward Cornwall and Margaret, his wife, conveyed their interest in Snitterfield to Robert Webb.

1581, March. Agnes Arden, widow of Robert Arden, made her will. She was the daughter of Thomas, and sister of Alexander Webb, and at the time of her marriage was the widow of John Hill, of Bearly ; but she was not the mother of Mary, the Poet's mother.

1581. John, fil Thomas Shakspeare, was baptised at Snitterfield.

1587. Henry Shakspeare was buried there.

1591, May 15. John Shakspeare's house in Henley Street is mentioned in a deed of George Badger's, as being next to his own ; and he also mentions lands lying between those of Thomas Coombe and Thomas Reynolds.

1596. Henry Shakspeare, and Margaret, wife of Thomas Shakspeare, were buried at Snitterfield.

14th November, 20 Elizabeth. John Shakspeare and Mary, his wife, conveyed to Edward Lambert a messuage and 1 virgate of land, and 4 acres of arable land in Wilnecote, conditional upon repayment of £40 in 1588. Fine, Pasc., 21 Elizabeth. Edmund Lambert, Quer., and John Shakspeare and Maria, his wife, Defts., of 2 messuages, 2 gardens, 50 acres land, 2 acres pasture, and 4 acres meadow in Awston Cantlowe.

1st March, 29 Elizabeth. Edmund Lambert died at Barton Henmarsh. His wife was Joan, sister of Mary Shakspeare. John, his son and heir.

24th March, 1597. John Shakspeare, of Stratford-on-Avon, on behalf of Mary, his wife, and William, their son and heir, filed a bill in Chancery against John, son and heir of Edmund Lambert, to redeem the said premises in Wilnecote.

24th November, 1599. John Lambert filed his answer. It is alleged that no further proceedings in this suit can be dis-

covered. It must either have been stopped by a settlement, or more probably from the exposure by the Defendant (who was basely trafficking upon the fact that the Shaksperes were Catholics) of the fact that John Shakspeare had been convicted and fined for recusancy a very short time before the institution of this suit.

It may be noted that neither Mary (Arden) nor William Shakspeare, the poet, were parties to this suit, as they ought to have been according to the invariable practice of the Courts. The only reason why they were not made parties is that they were both Catholics and incapable of suing in the Courts. The probability is that it will be found, if search be made, that this suit failed for this cause ; and this cause it was, doubtless, which enabled the Defendant to defraud his sister-in-law. This suit, therefore, constitutes the best evidence that the poet and his mother were not only Catholics, but avowed ones ; and this fully confirms the statement of Archdeacon Davis with respect to the poet. Nothing, indeed, can be stronger confirmation of it than this fact, that William Shakspeare never was a litigant in the superior Courts ; it may, indeed, be doubted whether he was the William Shakspeare who was a party to the petty suits for malt at Stratford, and it is far more likely that they were instituted by one of the several other William Shaksperes of this period ; but even if he did sue, the fact does not militate against the theory that he was a Catholic and therefore could not sue ; for the action was only tried in the local Court, and seeing that nearly all the leading inhabitants, including the Town Clerk, of Stratford were of the proscribed faith, and that, as is well-known, the majority of the people who had any care for religion were also Papists, this precedent goes for nothing ; and in the case of the tithes the Plaintiff, William Shakspeare—whoever he was—was not alone, but merely one of several persons who were suing. Certainly Thomas Green (his cousin) the Town Clerk, who sued with this William Shakspeare, was a Catholic. It is not quite clear, but probably a suit would not

be stopped if some of the complainants belonged to the established religion, or pretended to do so.

We do not know when John Shakspeare left Snitterfield and went to Stratford to take up his residence there, and we have no knowledge where he was born. The assumption of Halliwell, that he left his father's home in Snitterfield about 1551, is the most patent guess, based simply upon the fact that a John Shakspeare was fined for a nuisance in Henley Street in 1552. There is not a shadow of evidence that this is the Poet's father, and the probabilities are that it was not.

Henley Street is of considerable length, and the probabilities are, as there were two distinct purchases of houses in that street, that this was one of the other John Shaksperes; the Poet's father did not buy his house till long after, though possibly he resided there. So, too, Halliwell's account of his marriage with Mary Arden, a few weeks after her father's death, is purely a fabrication. There is no proof of any date for this marriage, and it may not have taken place for some time afterwards. Equally groundless is his remark that she was his fondly-loved daughter; he provided for her by his will and left her a considerable property, but possibly only an equal amount with that which he had previously settled by deed upon her sisters. It is rather curious, if he were so greatly attached to her, that he should have given her step-mother a life interest in her share of his estate.

French, in his *Genealogia* (which appears to be the only work on Shakspeare's family in any way reliable), mentions that Richard, of Snitterfield, had three sons—John, Thomas, and Henry. He evidently never heard of William, of Snitterfield, although probably he was a brother of Richard. Very certainly John, of Stratford-on-Avon, had a brother Henry, for they were both summoned in a suit between the descendants of Mayowe and Robert Webb in 1582. Robert Webb was first cousin to the poet, his father, Alexander, having married Margaret, sister of Mary Arden, and Robert Webb's aunt Agnes, widow of John

Hill, having married Robert Arden—in itself a strong clue connecting John, the poet's father, with Snitterfield.

By the fine in Pasc. 22 Elizabeth, made two years prior to this suit, John Shakspeare and Mary, his wife, as we have seen, had assigned their interest in one sixth of two parts of this property, the one sixth being, doubtless, Mary's share of it and the two parts being the two sixths granted by the Indenture of Henry VII. It is, therefore, easy to see why John Shakspeare should be called as a witness ; and it is more difficult to see why his brother Henry, who had no interest whatever in the matter, should also be called, unless it was because he had been the tenant of his brother John for this property.

We know but little of the history of Henry Shakspeare. He probably, as tenant of John—and as John himself—lived partly in Snitterfield and partly in Stratford ; and it is quite possible that he it was who resided in Hampton Lucy in 1581, the year after his brother sold the Snitterfield property to Robert Webb, who at once assigned to William Cookes, a relative, who twenty years later bought a large estate at Ingon and Hampton Lucy from Rice Griffyn and Margaret Throckmorton, his wife. It is probable, however, that Henry returned to be buried, for we find one Henry buried there in 1596, and there also Margaret, wife of Thomas Shakspeare, was buried. Probably Richard, the father, had been buried there also, but the Registers do not go so far back.

There is very little known of Thomas Shakspeare. He had a son John baptised at Snitterfield in 1581, after John Shakspeare had sold his property ; but that might have been because his wife was a native of that place, and having no home of his own, he might for a time have resided with her family. He does not appear to have been buried there, but his wife was buried there in 1596 ; and this makes it more likely that he was identical with Thomas Green, *alias* Shakspeare, who, as we have seen, was buried at Stratford in 1590. However, these points are

mere probabilities, which may be wholly rejected without depreciating the argument of this book.

There is a Thomas Shakspere to be accounted for, who in Mich. 39 Elizabeth had a grant of property ; 2 messuages, an orchard, 1 toft, 4 gardens, and 4 acres of pasture in Warwick, from Henry Ferrars the Antiquary. If he were the Poet's uncle, this disposes of the idea that he was Thomas Shakspeare *alias* Green ; but he may well have been a son of that man, who made a commencement of a family at Snitterfield, or possibly of the Warwick shoemaker.

Nothing is known of William Shakspere, of Snitterfield, except that he prised the goods of a resident there. We find a William Shakspere acting in a similar capacity for Edward Griffin, of Long Ichington, in 1557, of whom also nothing is known, unless from the will of John Shakspere, of Wroxall, (1574), from which it appears that he had a brother William, and like Edward Griffin, a brother-in-law, Richard Woodams ; in all probability this William Shakspere, of Snitterfield, was the same person.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SHAKSPERES, OF STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

THE first point to be considered is, when did the Shaksperes first come to Stratford ? A careful inspection of the Subsidy Rolls fails to give an account of the family ; and the Town Records, although very early and in good preservation generally, gives the most unsatisfactory account of them. It would almost seem as if the Shaksperes lived away from Stratford and were taxed elsewhere ; but there is no proof of any such taxation, and the puzzle is intensified by the fact that John Shakspeare, the father, actually possessed a large house in Stratford, which must have been of considerable value. How did this escape from being assessed ? There seems to be considerable misrepresentation about this property, but it is quite clear that, whether he had previously lived in it as a tenant or not, it was only purchased 17 Elizabeth (1575). The Fine records that John Shakspeare was querent, and Edmund Hall, and Emma, his wife, deforciant, of two messuages, two gardens, and two orchards. There can be no rational doubt that these two tenements represented the two houses called the Birthplace, which the poet mentions in his

will, and which Lady Barnard devised to Thomas Hart, grandson of the poet's sister Joan.

The tenement in Henley Street, presently to be mentioned, conveyed in 3 and 4 Philip and Mary to a John Shakespere, was probably the residence of the shoemaker, or of some other John Shakspere. This first Henley Street house has been the subject of much discussion by Shakesperian writers. It is needless to say that it was not the residence of the poet's father.

Knight remarks upon the singular fact (he calls it marvellous) that Malone, writing with the records of the Court Leet of Stratford before him, should have referred to John Shakspere taking a "lease" of the houses in Greenhill and Henley Street. There is nothing remarkable in this—at least, not unusual with him, for although Malone was a barrister by profession, he was—like so many of the craft—very inaccurate, and profoundly ignorant of the rudiments of law. But Charles Knight himself has translated these records very curiously, and (to the writer it appears) inaccurately. The entries are found in a view of Frankpledge, with the Court and Sessions of the Peace for the Borough of Stratford, held there the 2nd day of October, in the 3rd and 4th year of Philip and Mary, and the following is the (very properly unextended) record given by Knight :—

It pre' quod Georgius Turnor alienavit Joh'e Shakespere et hered' suis unum tent' cum gardin' et croft cum pertinent' in Grenehill Stret tent' de Dno lib'e p'r cart' p'r redd inde d'no p'r annu' vi d. et sect' cur' et id'e Johes *pd* (this surely means present in court, and should be written *ps*) in cur' fecit d'no fidelitatem pr' eisdem.

Which Knight translates :—

They present that George Turner has alienated to John Shakspere and his heirs one tenement, with a garden and croft with their appurtenances, in Greenhill Street held of the Lord *and delivered according to the roll* for the rent from thence to

the Lord of sixpence per annum and suit of Court, and the said John in the aforesaid Court did fealty to the Lord for the same.

The translation—"and delivered according to the Roll"—reads apparently like nonsense. Surely the meaning is that the land was held free (*liberè*) of the lord "by charter." This is shown by the tenant doing fealty, and gives to him a higher status than if the land were held by copy of Court Roll; and this is apparently the same tenure by which this same John Shakspeare held the other land granted at the same Court. Knight calls the tenant a copyholder, forgetting that doing fealty was evidence of freehold tenure.

It' quod Edward West alienavit p'd eo (something wrong here) Joh'e Shakspeare unu' tent' cum gardin' adjacen' in Henley Street pr' redd' inde D'no p'r ann' vi d. et sect' cur' et id' Joh'es p'd (? present) in cur' fecit fidelitatem.

It is very doubtful whether this was the Poet's father, since three years after this date he was described as of Snytterfield, (in the bond on his father's death), and had he been the owner of freehold property in Stratford he would surely have been so described, especially as his father was only a tenant of the Ardens. If it should be the same John, it disposes of the theory that he owed his fortune to his wife, for Mary Arden was certainly single at this period. But it seems most probable that it was neither the Poet's father, nor was the house referred to in this grant the birthplace; but that it was John the shoemaker, obtaining his residence in Henley Street, before which he formed the *sterquilinum* so pleasantly alluded to by Halliwell-Phillips, and the American admirers of the Poet.

There is another small point in this entry, which may be relied upon to shew that a freehold and not a copyhold interest passed; the land was conveyed, that is granted, or bargained "alienavit"; now a copyholder could not alienate his land. A copyholder could not convey or transfer his copyhold estate to

another otherwise than by surrender to the Lord and by request, to him to do so; and this entry mentions neither surrender nor admittance, but expressly refers to alienation by charter. Knight has based an ingenious argument with respect to the Poet's actual birthplace on the assumption that this first purchase was in 1556, and was of a copyhold property; whereas that transaction was very clearly of a freehold estate and quite a different property, and therefore the whole argument falls to the ground.

The records relating to the Poet and his father have been so often printed and are so well known that they are not reprinted here, whilst other documents of more remote interest perhaps, are included, just because they are not so well known, and will be the more welcome to those who are well acquainted with what is generally known of the Poet's history. This book does not profess to be a history of the Poet; it is intended to supply some facts which have hitherto been unknown, and to refute and dispose of, if possible, some of the numerous calumnies which have been heaped upon his memory; but above and beyond all other facts to give the key to the Poet's sad and solitary life, to account for the strange neglect of his own works and reputation of which he was guilty, by insisting strongly upon the fact—which was well-known to many—that he was a Catholic, a fact which even those who knew it failed to appreciate at its true importance; but which, fairly and fully considered, supplies the key to his extraordinary conduct. Only bear it in mind, and it will be seen at once why he did not, like other workers, obtain the full measure of profit to be gained from his works. That he did not is quite clear; and it is equally clear that, if he had printed his books, it would not have paid him the expense; because the pirates of his day would then have printed and published correct copies of his work, and would have been able to sell them at a lower price than he could; and he could not stop them or obtain any redress for this piracy, because, being a Papist, he could not sue in the Courts. The infamy of Elizabeth's conduct in thus

persecuting her own people, for no cause but that they would otherwise perforce look upon her own birth as illegitimate, is simply scandalous ; but it was only in accord with her own course of conduct, for this bright occidental star, to gratify her brutal lusts, stopped at nothing and trampled upon the home happiness and even the lives of others ; her carelessness of life was as reckless and cruel when following her vile amours as it was when engaged in stamping out, by her twenty years of resolute government, the religion in which she had been reared, and to which—if she believed anything—she adhered to the day of her death.

As previously stated, we have no knowledge of the date of the marriage of John Shakspeare with Mary Arden, the daughter of his father's late landlord. It was not celebrated in her father's lifetime, for she was then a mere child, though her exact age is also unknown ; nor is the date of his settlement in Stratford-on-Avon known. Probably the sons of Richard Shakspeare remained with him and helped to farm his land. We have the fact from the bond given upon the administration of his goods that his eldest son, John (probably the elder, because he was the administrator), remained at Snitterfield in February 1561. It is not probable that he was married before this date, but possibly a year or two afterwards. It has been asserted that Joan, the daughter of John Shakspeare, who was baptised at Stratford-on-Avon in 1558, and who died early, was his daughter ; but how is it proved that she was identical with the poet's sister ? Joan is a very common name, and there were several John Shaksperes about. We know of one who was fined for a nuisance several years earlier, and he may have been the father of Joan, and certainly Joan Hart, the poet's sister, was born afterwards.

It is said that from 1561 to 1586 John Shakspeare remained a member of the Corporation, which a Catholic could not regard as an honour ; and the Corporation records shew that he did not so regard it, for he neglected to attend their repeated

summons, and consequently, and no doubt with his full approbation, they appointed someone in his place. He seems to have lived, if not from the first, at least the greater part of his life, in his comfortable mansion with his pleasant garden in Henley Street—in his day, doubtless, abutting upon the meadows surrounding it. And here the poet spent his early days, tripping daily to the Grammar School, as he has so aptly described in his *Seven Ages of Man*. His was probably a bright and happy childhood until he became old enough to share with his parents the deadly terrors caused by Queen Elizabeth in order to protect her birthright. Then, indeed, would he experience the sickening misery of that fearful period of our history ; and, as he was a highly sensitive, sympathetic lad, from that time he must have suffered much unquiet. But doubtless his joys were frequent in passing over to Wroxall, Rowington and Hazeley and Snitterfield, visiting his relations at those places, and learning from them the pleasures of the chase. We know nothing for certain ; but how easy it is to imagine the wonder and delight of the boy in seeing the noble deer shot down by the well-aimed arrow, or caught in pursuit by the noble hounds. That this life accorded with his views of happiness is as apparent from his writings as it is from the traditions of his enemies.

And his life was not without intellectual pleasures, even in Stratford. At the College there would be several grave seniors who would aid his enquiring mind in the studies of antiquities ; amongst them, probably, were men who would delight in his intellectual powers and aid him to cultivate them, and, under the shady trees of the old churchyard, they may have assisted him to translate even generally unknown classics, whilst at the Theatre—which was probably held at the Town Hall or in the Schoolroom below it—he would behold those plays of which his father was evidently fond, since they were performed whilst he was chief magistrate. And probably he often sat by his father whilst those other scenes from real life occurred which passed before him as he sat administering law as a Justice of the

Peace. In these performances he would study not only scenic effects but real life, and gain an insight into the characters and habits of men. What his father's accomplishments were we do not know, but because he followed the practice of the age, and appended his mark or cross to deeds signed by him, it does not follow that he was illiterate; and from his having for so many years acted as a Justice of the Peace it seems impossible to believe that he was absolutely unlettered; for what we know, he may have been a profound scholar, and he may have occupied his leisure with grave studies. It is a pity that the inventory of his books has not been preserved, but it cannot be helped. It is absurd, because it cannot be found, to charge him with ignorance or with keeping his home dirty or bookless.

Mary Arden, too, the Poet's mother, why involve her in these unpleasant charges? She may have been (and she probably was, from the appearance of her bright, beautiful boy) as beautiful and of as classical a form as himself. Some of his beauty is preserved even in that terrible mask taken from his dead face, which speaks too plainly of the ravages of death; but looked at carefully, bits of great beauty of one side of his face can even yet be distinguished, though the greater part of it is swollen and disfigured by disease and corruption. And why should not Mary Arden have been as clever and intellectual as other girls of that period? Although they had not the advantages, which Halliwell deplures, of the three-pronged fork or the modern table-napkin, it does not follow that she used a pitchfork at her meals, or "manipulated" her food with bits of wood too worthless to be inventoried. The girls of her period were, like many girls of our own, trained in convents, taught music and languages, illumination of manuscripts and embroidery, and all the pretty accomplishments of civilised life, including, of course, dancing and deportment, which the modern misses enjoy and which the new woman despises. If, as Halliwell asserts, she was the best-beloved of Robert Arden's many daughters, why should he deprive her of the benefits of the best education?

Doubtless Mary Arden was trained at Wroxall Priory, near the home of the Shaksperes ; and in all probability it was under the roof of Richard Shakspere, of Hazeley, where the poor evicted prioress, the Lady Jane Shakspere, resided (who had probably been her own superior), that she met and loved her future husband, the poet's father. Would not the young mother take her beautiful boy to be seen, and caressed, and blessed by the dear old dame, as was the custom in those good old Catholic days ? The Prioress survived till the year 1570 ; and she must have been of a very great age at her death, for she held office in the Priory early in the reign of King Henry VIII. Here too, possibly, the young girl saw poor Katherine Parr, the Royal Bluebeard's last Queen, who gobbled up all the lands of the Priory and of all the religious houses about as a portion of her dower. How the country people of those parts, who knew and loved the old foundations, must have loathed the very name of Royalty.

Hunter has discovered that a John Shakspere lived at Clifford in 1579, he being described in a will of 1583 as indebted to the estate of John Ashwell, of Stratford. Knight very acutely had concluded that the Poet's father lived out of the borough, because he was excused payment of certain taxes together with a Mr. Bratford, who certainly lived out, (the subsidy roll shews that he was taxed elsewhere), so John Shakspere may have lived elsewhere, although he was not taxed for any other place as far as has yet been discovered. Still, his inability to pay a trifling debt, so long as he had his freehold house in Henley Street to pay, is incomprehensible, and why was he not assessed for that house ? What difficulty was there in his creditors issuing an *eligit* and so seizing it ? He may have had no goods to seize in the Borough because he lived out of it ; but he possessed real estate within it.

The family of Shakspere at Clifford Chambers, adjoining Stratford, judging by the similarity of Christian names, were probably related to the Poet.

John Shakspere, of Clifford, sued William Smith, of Stratford, 1572.

The Clifford Chambers registers contain the following entries :—

- 1546, October 26th. Jarram fil Jarram Cookes.
- 1560, October 15th. John Shaksper and Julian Hobbys, m.
- 1579. Charles Malary and Alice Shakspere, m.
- 1581, May 28th. Jerome fil William Griffine, baptised.
- 1583, June 18th. Henry, son of Antonio Shakspere, buried.
- 1587. Katherine Moris, servant to John Shakspere, buried.
- 1608, July 22. Julian Shakespeare buried.
- 1610, October 20. John Shakspere buried.

This place is only two miles from Stratford, and it may well be that this is the John Shakspeare who has puzzled Halliwell and others, causing them to make ridiculous blunders about the habits and the poverty of the Poet's father, and his inability to pay small debts. It is clear this man was suing in the Stratford Court, since in one case he is described as of Clifford ; but, supposing he had a shop or business in the Borough, this private residence would not be described, for the former alone would give him a standing in the Court.

The absurdity of these stories is apparent when it is known that John Shakspeare, the Poet's father, lived during the whole period of his residence in Stratford in an excellent house ; a mansion even in these days, and left this house untouched to his son ; and that, when he applied to the College of Arms, the value of his real estate is declared to have been fully £500. What was to prevent any creditor, for the paltry sums alleged to be owing by him, from seizing and selling this landed property, and of so paying themselves ?

As a Papist, and his name appears in one recusant roll, he would receive no favour in the Court. One of these ridiculous figments was that he kept away from Church to avoid arrest. It is very probable that he kept away from Church very

frequently, as often as he could indeed : simply because he was a Papist, and could not recognise the bright occidental star as a divine teacher, though by law she was firmly established Supreme Head of the Catholic Church on earth, very earthy ; and no doubt any excuse was good enough and would pass muster, when all the leading people of Stratford were of the same way of thinking. The fact that about 1580, John Shakspeare had ceased to obey the summons to attend the Town Council meetings, and that he ceased to be a member of the Corporation on that account strongly confirm this theory. We know that except for these paltry debts, there were no judgments in his name, for the rolls of all the Courts have been searched in vain, which is a complete answer to these reflections upon his solvency. Nor are we driven to conclude that the Poet's father was the purchaser of all the little properties in Stratford made in the name of John Shakspeare. There was, as we have seen, at least one other John Shakspeare in the town ; John the Shoemaker, a respectable man, for he obtained a lease from the Corporation, and was Master of the Shoemakers' Guild in 1580, who may have shared in these small transactions. And besides him, there was a Thomas Shakspeare, who was sued in 23 Elizabeth, for a few pounds for malted barley, who was very possibly the Poet's uncle. From the number of transactions recorded, it is probable that he was a publican or maltster, and possibly the William Shakspeare who also sued for malt was connected with him. We find a William Shakspeare, who has been rashly assumed to be the Poet, though without a tittle of evidence, suing for some malt in 1597. Thomas Shakspeare was probably the person buried at Stratford under the name of Thomas Green *alias* Shakspeare, 16th May, 1590 ; and he was possibly the father of Thomas Green the Town Clerk, whose origin has never been discovered, but who called himself a cousin of the Poet, and who joined in the purchase of the tithes. Richard Green lived at Bridgetown, close to Snytterfield, and his son Edward married a daughter of Thomas Coombe, whilst his niece married John Green, of Stratford-on-Avon.

Again we find other Shaksperes living at Hampton Lucy, also close to Stratford. Henry Shakspeare had a daughter Lettice baptised there, 10th June, 1581; and a son James, 16th October, 1585. And there was another James Shakspeare living at Ingon, also close by, who was buried at Hampton Lucy, 25th September, 1589. Alcester is not very far distant, where a William Shakspeare, an infant, was baptised in 1536, who was discovered in the grand old mare's nest found in that place. In fact there were plenty of Shaksperes about to account for all the petty debts sued for in Stratford Courts, without troubling either the poet or his father. Some of these Shaksperes were very likely cousins of the Poet; he had undoubtedly many relations about Rowenton and Wroxall, who would be driven from their homes when they were seized through the rapacity of the Supreme Head of the Church; and they might be expected to settle down in their dear old Warwickshire County, as near as they could to their home of centuries. It is curious how we get tempting bits of pedigree all round. A John Shakspeare, of Rowington, who held land at Wroxall in 22 Henry VIII, had a son, Antonio. We find an Antonio Shakspeare marrying at Budbrook (the parish of Hampton Curlew of Richard Shakspeare), 14th November, 1573, to one Joane Whitrefe. The first Antonio's mother was called Elena Cockes. We find in 1576 (June 17th), John Cox, of Rowington, married at Budbrook to one Joane Tomlinson; and 1st December, 1585, Thomas Webb married Margaret Cockes there. A little earlier, 8th November, 1564, John Coombe had a son William baptised there; the godfathers and godmother were John Somerfield, Edward Graunt, and Katherine Korpson. A little later, 24th March, 1575, Henrie, son of (Antonio) Shakspeare and Joane, his wife, was baptised there, and then we lose all traces of the Shaksperes at that place until 1642, when a John Shakspeare was buried; and 1655, a Nicolas.

It is easy to account for so many Wroxall names, Cockes, Coombe, Webb, and Shakspeare, in the place, because the Convent possessed lands there; and Richard Shakspeare, their

steward, probably lived there in 16 Henry VIII, and this almost certainly identifies them with the Poet's family. The Stratford Registers give further evidence, which seems to identify this family with those of Clifford Chambers. The first entry in the Clifford Registers is the burial of Henry, son of Antonio Shakspeare, on the 10th of June, 1583. Was he the son of Antonio, of Budbrook, born only 8 years previously? Probably, because the Stratford Registers of only 4 months earlier shew that one Antonio Shakspeare, of Hampton, had a daughter Elizabeth baptised there. This Hampton has been rashly assumed to be Hampton Episcopus or Lucy; but it is probably Hampton Curlew in Budbrook. Jordan thought it was Hampton-in-Arden. Curiously, too, poor despised Jordan, whom the Malones and Halliwells do nothing but abuse, knew something which they only partially adopted, although Malone could use him to search Registers and to invent plausible pictures of residences. He, poor man, relates that John Shakspeare, (the Poet's father), had an uncle Anthony, who in probability was this very man of Budbrook, and perhaps also the son of Elenor Cockes, who, at the age of 70 or, at any rate, when he was much too old for the purpose, chose to marry Joane Whitrefe at Budbrook, and by her became the father of the sickly child who died at Clifford Chambers, and the little girl baptised at Stratford-on-Avon. This is admittedly a series of guesses, but there is so much probability in them that they may be excused; but, whether true or not, it matters little to the arguments of this book; if true, they add something to the numberless probabilities on which the argument is founded, though perhaps not very greatly.

A Thomas Shakspeare lived at Alcester who, from his will dated 12th September, 1538, proved 11th April, 1539, appears to be the son of a Richard and Margaret Shakspeare; but he was a person of small means, and little or nothing can be learnt respecting him. He had a wife (who was the mother of Alexander Fox), and a son named William, who was then an infant.

The subsidy Rolls for 14 Henry VIII. shew a Thomas Shakspeare assessed 40s. for goods at Alcester. The Muster Rolls for 28 Henry VIII. give him as a Billman, spelling the name Sikestaffe. In 35 Elizabeth no Shakspeare was assessed at Alcester, and the family was probably extinct or too poor to be taxed.

Joseph Hunter, in his Illustrations, unfortunately made a rash guess that this Richard, the father, was the bailiff of Wroxall, he being unaware at that time of the number of persons of this name. It is enough to state that there is not a shadow of proof known at present connecting this Richard or any member of his family with any place except that of Alcester itself.

The name of John Shakspeare, of Stratford-on-Avon, is to be found in a Recusant Roll of 1592, and in a list of Popish Recusants of the 16th Car. I. are to be found under Old Stratford, William and Thomas Coombe, Thomas Clopton, Thomas Green, and John Hathaway; and for Budbrook, Nicolas Shakspeare.

In an undated Roll of the Hundred of Barlichway, including Wroxhall and Rowenton (probably of the date of Queen Elizabeth), are to be found the names of Mary Shakspeare, Richard and Thomas, his son.

Roger Shaxsper had a pension of 100s. given him on being expelled from Bordesley, 2 and 3 Philip and Mary. (Cardinal Pole's Book.)

Hunter writes :—" Dr. Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, was said to be a Catholic; he was the medical attendant of the Shrewsbury family." Hall was a Churchwarden, but what did that mean? Nothing, except that he was afraid to avow his religion.

In a M.S. of the Capuchin Irish Friars it is stated that many of the players were Catholics.

The will of John Shakspeare is taken from Jordan's work, edited by Halliwell-Phillips, with the following note.

"The following is a true and perfect copy of a spiritual will, testament, protestation, profession, and confession of faith, of John Shakespeare, found under the tiling in the house where he resided and where his children were born, on the 29th day of April, 1757, by Joseph Mosly, a bricklayer, of Stratford, who was then repairing the house for Thomas Hart."

I.

In the name of God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost, the most holy and blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, the holy host of archangels, angels, patriarchs, prophets, evangelists, apostles, saints, martyrs, and all the celestial court and company of Heaven. Amen. I, John Shakspeare, an unworthy member of the Holy Catholick religion, being at this my present writing in perfect health of body and sound mind, memory, and understanding; but calling to mind the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death, and that I may be possibly cut off in the blossome of my sins, and called to render an account of all my transgressions, externally and internally, and that I may be unprepared for the dreadful trial, either by sacrament, pennance, fasting, or prayer, or any other purgation whatever, do in the holy presence above specified, of my own free and voluntary accord, make, and ordaine this my last spiritual will, testament, confession, protestation, and profession of faith; hoping hereby to receive pardon for all my sinnes and offences; and thereby to be made partaker of life everlasting, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour and Redeemer, who took upon himself the likeness of man, suffered death, and was crucified upon the cross for the redemption of sinners.

II.

ITEM.—I, John Shakspeare, do by this present protest, freely acknowledge and confess that in my past life I have been a most abominable and grievous sinner, and therefore unworthy to be forgiven without a true and sincere repentance for the same. But trusting in the manifold mercies of my blessed Saviour and Redeemer, I am encouraged by relying on His sacred word to hope for salvation, and be made a partaker of His heavenly kingdom, as a member of the celestial company of angels, saints, and martyrs, there to reside for ever and ever in the court of my God.

III.

ITEM.—I, John Shakspeare, doe by this present protest, declare that I am certain I must passe out of this transitory

life into another that will last to eternity, I do hereby most humbly implore and intreat my good and guardian angel to instruct me in this my solemn preparation, protestation, and confession of faith, at least spiritually, in will adoring and most humbly beseeching my Saviour that He will be pleased to assist me in so dangerous a voyage, to defend me from the snares and deceites of my infernall enemies, and to conduct me to the secure haven of His eternall blisse.

IV.

ITEM.—I, John Shakespere, doe protest that I will also passe out of this life armed with the last sacrament of extreme unction: the which, if through any let or hinderance, I should not be able* to have, I doe now also for that time demand and crave the same, beseeching His Divine Majesty that He will be pleased to anoint my senses, both internall and externall, with the sacred oyle of His infinite mercy, and to pardon me all my sins† by feeling, speaking, feeling‡, smelling, hearing, touching, or by any other way whatsoever.

V.

ITEM.—I, John Shakespere, do by this my§ present protest, that I will|| not through any temptation whatsoever despair of the Divine goodness for the multitude and greatnesse of my sins, for which, although I confesse I have deserved hell, yet will I steadfastly hope in God's infinite mercy, knowing that He hathe heretofore pardoned as many and as great sinners as myself, whereof I have good warrant, sealed with His¶ mouth in Holy Writ, whereby He pronounceth that He is not come to call the just but sinners.

VI.

ITEM.—I, John Shakespere, doe protest that I do not know that I have ever done any good worke meritorious of life everlasting, and if I have done any I do acknowledge that I have done it with a greate deal of negligence and imperfection; neither should I have been able to have done the least without the assistance of His divine grace. Wherefore let the divell remain confounded; for I doe in no wise presume to merit heaven by such good workes alone, but through the merits and bloud of my Lord and Saviour Jesus shed upon the Crosse for me, most miserable sinner.

VII.

ITEM.—I, John Shakespere, do protest, by this present writing, that I will patiently endure and suffer all kinds of

* Another copy introduces the word "then" here. † The same introduces "committed" here.

‡ Another copy introduces the word "feeling" instead of "tasting."

§ "My" omitted in the other copy. || "Never" instead of "not" in the other copy.

¶ "Sacred" introduced here.

infirmity, sickness, yea, and the paine of deathe itself, wherein if it should happen [which God forbid] that through violence of pain and agony, or by subtilty of the devill, I should fall into any impatience or temptation of blasphemy or murmuration against God or Catholick faith, or give any sign of bad example, I doe henceforth and for the present repent me, and am most heartily sorry for the same, and I do renounce all the evill whatsoever.** I might have then done or said, beseeching the divine clemency that He will not forsake me in that grievous and painful agony.

VIII.

ITEM.—I, John Shakespere, by virtue of this present testament, I doe pardon all the injuries and offences that any one hath ever done unto me, either in my† reputation, goods,‡ or any other way whatsoever, beseeching sweet Jesus to pardon them for the same, and I do desire that they will doe the same* by me whom I have offended or injured in any sort howsoever.

IX.

ITEM.—I, John Shakespere, doe heere protest that I doe render infinite thanks to His Divine Majesty, for all the benefitts that I have received as well secret as manifest, and in particular for the benefit of my creation, redemption, sanctification, conservation and vocation to the holy knowledge of Him and His true Catholicke faith, but above all for His soe great expectations of me to penance, where He might most justly have taken me out of this life when I least thought of it. yea even then when I was plunged in the dirty†† puddle of my sinnes. Blessed be therefore and praised for ever His infinite patience and charity.

X.

ITEM.—I, John Shakespere, doe protest that I am willing, yea I do infinitely desire and humbly crave that of this my last will and testament the glorious and ever blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, refuge and advocate of sinners (whom I honour specially above all other saints) my be the chief executresse, together with those other saints and patrons (St. Winifrida) all whom I invoke and beseech to be present at the hour of my death, that she and they may comfort me with their desired presence, and crave sweet Jesus that He will receive my soul into peace.

XI.

ITEM.—In virtue of this present writing, I, John Shakespere, doe likewise most willingly, and with all humility,

** "Which" in another copy.

† "My" omitted in other copy.

‡ "Life" occurs here in other copy.

* "Like" occurs in another copy for "same." †† "Durtie" in another copy.

constitute and ordaine my good angell for defender and protector of my soule in the dreadful day of judgement, when the finall sentence of eternall life and death shall be discussed and given, beseeching Him that as my soule was appointed to His custody and protection when I lived, even soe He will vouchsafe to defend the same in that hour, and conduct it to eternal blisse.

XII.

ITEM.—I, John Shakespere, doe in like manner praye and beseech all my dear friends, parents, and kinsfolkes, by the bowels of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that, since it is uncertain what lot will befall me, for fear notwithstanding least by reason of my sinnes I be to passe and stay a long while in purgatory, they will vouchsafe to assist and favour** me with their holy prayers and satisfactory workes, especially with the holy sacrifice of the masse, as being the most effectual meanes to deliver soules from their torments and paines, from the which, if I shall with God's gracious goodness and by their vertuous workes be delivered, I doe promise that I will not be ungrateful for so great a benefitt.

XIII.

ITEM.—I, John Shakespere, doe by this my last will and testament, bequeath my soule, as soon as it shall be delivered and loosened from the prison of my body, to be entombed in the sweet and amorous coffin of the side of Jesus Christ, and that in this lyfe having† sepulchre it may rest, and live perpetually enclosed in that eternall habitation of repose, there to blesse for ever and ever that direful iron of the launce, which, like a "sharp-cutting* razor, formed" so sweet and pleasant a monument within the sacred breast of my Lord and Saviour.

XIV.

ITEM.—Lastly, I, John Shakespere, doe protest that I will willingly accept of death in what manner soever it may befall me, confirming‡ my will unto the will of God, accepting of the same in satisfaction of my sinnes, and giving thanks unto His Divine Majesty for the like† He hath bestowed upon —, and if it please Him to prolong or shorten the same, blessed be He also a thousand thousand times, into whose most holy handes I commend my soule and bodye, my life and death, and besecch Him above all things that He never permit any change to be made by me, John Shakespeare, of this my last§ will and testament.||

** "Succour" instead of "favour" in another copy.

† "Giving" instead of "having," in another copy.

* "Charge in a *causore formes*," in another copy.

‡ "Confirming" instead of "confirming."

† "Life" instead of "like." § "Aforesaid" instead of "last." || Add "Amen."

I, John Shakespere, have made this present writing of protestation, confession and charter, in presence of the blessed Virgin Mary, my angel guardian, and all the celestial court as witnesses hereunto, the which my meaning is that it be of full value now, presently, and for ever with the force and virtue of testament, codicill, and donation, in cause* of death confirminge it a new beinge in perfect health of soule and bodye, and signed with my** owne hand, carryinge also the same about me; and for the better declaration thereof, my will and intention is that it be finally buried with me after my death. Pater noster, Ave Maria, credo Jesu [line ends] Son of David have mercy on me Amen. [2nd line ends.]

It would not appear from the terms of the will of John Shakspere that there is any reason why it should not be genuine. The supposition that he could not write is without evidence to support it. He may have been a very good scholar; he was a man of ample means and leisure, and was probably a studious man. If it is not his will, where is his true will to be found? None has ever been produced except this one, which, of course, did not require proof; indeed he proposed that it should be buried with him. Malone believed in it at one time, though he afterwards disavowed it; his opinion, either way, is of very small consequence, but his acceptance only shows that the way it was produced to him was consistent with its validity. Chalmers supposes that it was drawn up by the family priest; and this is quite likely, though it is just as likely that it is the work of the testator himself. It is, as Hunter (a Dissenter) writes, of a high Catholic spirit, "full of the Virgin, guardian angels," etc., and so forth—things so very distasteful to Protestants that they are glad to believe it spurious; but in truth it is written in such an admirable spirit of true piety, in such a meek and contrite spirit, as if the writer felt the wickedness and weakness of his conduct in suppressing his true sentiments, and in preferring the honours of this world to that which the Poet himself has declared, in a true Catholic spirit, is higher than all—the fear of God. It fits so exactly the case of the good but weak old man, that it is difficult not to accept it as true. The key-note of the whole document is the fear

* "Course" instead of "cause." ** "Mine" instead of "my."

that the writer might die without receiving the consolations of his faith, this was the dread of all poor earnest souls at the time, and to save them from it was the reason why so many Catholic priests incurred the terrible danger of discovery which so often ended with death. It is evidently the outpouring of a wounded spirit, the wailing of a miserable man, dissatisfied with himself, and longing that he had had time over again that he might have acted differently ; for he almost prays that persecution may come down upon him even then that his wickedness might be washed out in his life-time and that he might die without the stain of moral cowardice, without the sin of having denied his Lord, upon his soul. Perhaps, but this admission would seem to play into the hands of the Donellyites (if so it cannot be helped, for it is most probable) the misery which, it is apparent, was in the mind of the writer was partly the anguish of soul which he naturally felt on seeing his bright and beautiful boy running astray. Would he not feel that his cowardice and dissimulation had deadened and destroyed the seeds of religion in his boy's heart, and the force of example to sustain him was wanting through his fault ; how could his boy respect a religion which his father would put aside when inconvenient ? What was it worth if it could be so treated ? All this and much more must have passed through his mind, as tales of his son's wildness were brought before him. And what a blow to him must have been his poor boy's marriage, not merely on account of the inferior position of her parents, if she had any, but because of the cause of it. No doubt the good old man might even hasten the wedding, though from the false name given at the Register it would seem to be unknown to him ; but it would be a bitter trouble to him, and one which might easily cause him to set down his sorrows as he had done. We must not, however, blame John Shakspeare too severely, though he may have blamed himself. The miseries of Catholics were not sentimental ; and, as Hunter very justly observes, he shared his dissimulation with myriads of his countrymen, and it is unfair to place an enforced with a spontaneous insincerity.

Still, on the other hand, it may be said that with a little more firmness on the part of Catholics, Burleigh, even with twenty years of resolute government, had not succeeded in rooting out, as he did for a long time, the Christian religion.

The whole life of William Shakspeare seems to tally with the sentiments of this will ; he felt for others—for the struggling and helpless—an infinite pity ; his great heart went out to the bruised and wounded, and he embraced those whom the world in its harshness had cast aside. His eye was ever beaming with love and sympathy for all ; he discerns goodness in the worst of men ; he can even feel for those whose acts would seem to have cut them off from all sympathy. He sought to excite pity for the wretched Lady Macbeth when, in her madness, she pities herself for the blood which she cannot wash from off her "little hands." Who but Shakspeare could have thought of exciting sympathy for such a woman in her situation ? The exquisite tenderness which he excites for Juliet might have been expected, for she was altogether sweet and loveable ; but Lady Macbeth, who except Shakspeare can do otherwise than hate and condemn her ?

The Rev. Richard Davies, Archdeacon of Lichfield and Rector of Sapperton, who died 1708, added some notes to a biography of the Poet, to the effect that he was oft whipped and sometimes imprisoned by Sir Thomas Lucy ; and he added that he, too, died a Papist. This testimony is the more valuable that it comes from one who can least be expected to have any sympathy with the fact, who, indeed, would deplore it, if he did not harshly condemn it. This slight account of his last moments, even from a Protestant clergyman, gives one hope that, however carelessly the Poet may have lived, yet at last he did not die without the consolations of his religion. R.I.P.

Knight, of course, rejects the religious testament of John Shakspeare as spurious, and indulges in a good deal of froth, and fume, and rash assertion in disparagement of it. His words are in sad confusion. He repeats the same things three times (page

38 of the 3rd edition, 1865), as if repetition would add strength to his argument, which after all amounts to this, that John Shakspeare must at one time have taken the oath of supremacy when he became chief magistrate ; and yet in his will he calls upon his family to obtain for him the consolations of his religion at the hour of his death. There was nothing uncommon in this prayer ; indeed, it was the common experience of thousands who, like him, were Catholics at heart, and who yet preferred the emoluments of office ; or perhaps, indeed, he only accepted them in order to avoid the terrible consequences of openly admitting his religion. Did not Mr. Knight know that the priests of the Catholic Church did not cease during Elizabeth's reign, and long afterwards, to travel through the country, to render those consolations to the dying and the living in secret ? It was a common practice with secret Catholics, even in later times, to have the burial service of their own Church sung in private and afterwards to be buried with the Protestant service. But there is another argument. It is said that the Poet could not have been a Catholic, because in *King John* there is a denunciation of a false priest, and in *King Henry VIII.* Mr. Knight would make the Poet responsible for the ridiculous prophecy of the glory and happiness (save the mark !) of the reign of the tyrant Elizabeth. If Shakspeare would not write a line in her honour immediately after her death, was it likely that he would introduce this fustian into his play of *Henry the VIII.*, which certainly did not see the light in her day ; and probably that of *King John*, though attributed to Shakspeare, was not his work ; at all events, so many hands are apparent in that play that the passage in question may not be that written by Shakspeare. It smacks too much of a later date. King John no doubt defied the Pope, but from very devilry, and not on religious grounds. It was reserved to Henry VIII. to disavow and destroy the Catholic religion upon purely religious principles. Bluff King Hal might have some little private motives in the matrimonial line (he had not then taken to the use of the axe to loosen the marriage bonds), but it cannot be denied that he had a tender conscience.

Knight writes (page 58) :—"The 13th item of this strange production appears to us in common with many other passages, to be conceived in that spirit of exaggeration, which would mark the work of an imitator of the language of the sixteenth century, rather than the production of one habitually employing it. Surely this is not the language of a plain man in earnest." Why not? If you can only conceive that the man believed in the religion he had suppressed and disavowed, the whole will is most natural. Knight speculates as to the monster who invented it, but he acquits John Jordon of having done so, and he is quite safe in that respect, for the composition of such a work was far beyond Jordan's capacity. He seems to point at Dr. Ireland as the probable culprit, but he has yet to show how it could possibly advance his views—or anyone's views. Besides, it was discovered long before Dr. Ireland's time. Nobody can doubt that John Shakspeare was a Catholic. Mr. Lemon's discovery that he was returned as a recusant in 1592 sets that point at rest. No one pretended to be a Catholic for the mere love of ruination and persecution; and it must be remembered that this will was produced in 1756—years before Ireland flourished, or Lemon discovered the State Paper, which, probably, at the former period was unknown. Besides, what was to be gained by the fact? A man who was old enough to be married, perhaps in Queen Mary's time, was, of course, a Catholic by birth and education; and nothing is more natural than that he should return to his faith in his old age. And, as a matter of course, sweet Mary Arden was brought up as a Catholic, and would have nurtured her beautiful boy in her own faith.

As already stated, we really know nothing of the history of John Shakspeare, the Poet's father. There is no other will than that which is called the religious testament, and there was no administration to his goods. The probability is that he had disposed of them in his life-time to his son William. That he had property near to the close of his life is clear from the terms of the application for coat armour (so well-known that it is

useless to repeat it) ; and it is not likely that his son, who was then rich, would have left him in want. The probability is that his son lived with him until he bought the new place, which was, it appears from the Fine, in Pasc. 39 Elizabeth. It was made between the Poet and William Underhill, and confirmed a few years later by Hercules Underhill, his son. Probably the Halls lived with the Poet in the new place, whilst his father, and his mother during her life, resided in the old, for he evidently kept both places and died possessed of them both. Probably he had intended to leave his old house to his daughter Judith, had she not misconducted herself.

It has been frequently asserted by the school of Halliwell that John Shakspeare could not write, and possibly it was the custom of the Town Clerk to write the names of those present ; but certainly the signature, John Shackspere, to the Roll on the 29th September, 1565, upon the appointment of John Wheler to the office of bailiff, appears to be an original one. The point has, probably, been too hastily assumed, and a proper examination of the original Rolls would possibly bring the truth to light ; not that the fact that they were written by the Clerk would determine the question in the negative, for there is frequent evidence of people who could write well having allowed the scribe to write for them, or having used their mark—the mark being, in fact, a solemn act—the mark of the Cross.

Again, the stories of John Shakspeare having been in trade are simply baseless. The acts of other persons of his name in trade have been attributed to him. That which has passed current most frequently is that he was a wool stapler in a large way ; but this depends entirely on the fact that the arms of the wool staplers are to be found in a window of the birthplace. This house was probably an ancient one in his day, and some wool stapler (if any resided in the town) may have lived there. But these arms were, in fact, those of the Cloptons, and were very likely removed from the New Place when it was pulled down, or possibly transferred by the Poet himself, who may

have loved his old home better than his new, and might find it more quiet and full of peace. But the Cloptons were a rich and numerous family, and very possibly one of them resided in this house before the Shaksperes bought it. It may be safely assumed that there is no evidence whatever that the Poet's father was engaged in any trade.

Unquestionably the oldest biography of the Poet extant is that contained in the diary of John Ward, Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1648-79. He, no doubt, records in his diary not only the gossip of the place, but something of the actual truth. Shakspeare had only been dead about thirty years when Ward came there, so that no doubt he must have conversed with many persons who remembered him and with some who actually knew him. This was a momentous period of our history, when men's minds were distracted by more serious things than the reputation of a mere poet. The natural result of the great reformation had followed its due course, and, the Church having first of all been subverted, the whole fabric of society was broken up and a terrible state of confusion had ensued. The old vicar was probably a very mild or a very cunning old man, or he would not have lived through both the revolution and the restoration and yet have retained his office. He must have taken good care not to make himself obnoxious to the Dissenters, who now, through the aid of the revolution, ruled the land with fire and sword, forcing down their crude doctrines at the point of the bayonet, and caring as little for life—that is, the life of others—as the bloody King Hal himself or good Queen Bess had done in their days. The Dissenters had a fine time of it under Cromwell, and had it not been that he was a man of firmness and kept them back, the scenes of the worst days recorded in Biblical history would have been enacted over again, the Dissenters of course taking the part of the destroyers. They were delighted when Cromwell gave them an excuse to use arms to crush their enemies—that is, those who happened conscientiously to differ from them in religion, and who were better informed and better mannered than themselves. The

tyranny of a religious fanatic is worse than the rage of the heathen. The poor old Vicar of Stratford, in keeping his head above water, had had no time to read Shakespere, and determined to do so lest he be thought ignorant ; clearly showing that as things were settling down under Charles II. men began to give the Poet some thought, and shewing also that he must have had great admirers, or the vicar would not have been afraid of being considered ignorant on account of his want of knowledge of his works. His doubt whether Dr. Heyling was right in omitting Shakspere's name amongst those of the dramatic poets famous in England would amuse even Mr. Donnelly. It only shews how literature had sunk in those days, and how little critical judgment its chief writers possessed. No one now doubts as to the beauty of Shakspere's work, the only question is an absurd and unwarrantable attempt to deprive him of the authorship.

The Rev. Mr. Ward also gives very valuable evidence in favour of Shakspere being the author of his plays. He tells us that he supplied the stage with two plays every year, and for it had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of £1,000 a year. Now that sum was a very large and noble income, for he is speaking of the reign of King James I., and no doubt he was referring to Shakspere's later years, when it was always supposed he had retired from the stage and was living at Stratford. This is just what we should suppose an author of such works would receive ; but could he have earned so great an income so easily, for only a couple of plays a year, unless it was known that he was a great author and wrote them himself. Had he been a mere hack, however clever, he would not have received such payment, or anything like it. This fact is as good a proof of his position, amongst playwrights, as the fee-book of a barrister, or physician, at the present day showing earnings to the amount of £20,000 a year is absolute proof of the devotion and approbation of solicitors, and of clients and patients.

In truth Shakspeare was master of the situation. It was known, no doubt, that he cogged his plots sometimes, and sometimes his speeches, sometimes whole stories and scenes; yet he was known also to possess the power of selecting only that which was good, and of putting such good work upon it that its author could hardly recognise it. Is it any reproach to the silversmith that he must take his ingot of silver upon which to make his beautiful work? Shakspeare could invent both his plots and his words when he pleased, and it is said that it cost him even more labour when he availed himself of the ideas of others; but be this as it may, no one could turn out such work as he could, and certainly no one, at his date, could so easily obtain such enormous fees. Unfortunately no contract for any of his works has ever turned up, and probably none were made. The great master could work or not, as he pleased; and as he could not sue upon any contract, probably he would make none. But at all events we have in the old vicar's diary ample evidence to prove that he was regarded in his life-time as the author of his own works, and that he was so highly appreciated that he could obtain an enormous price for them.

The following documents are probably but little known. The author is indebted to Mrs. Stopes for the following entry from the Lord Chamberlain's Rolls, 1594:—

To William Kempe, William Shakspeare, and Richard Burbage, servants of the Lord Chamberlain upon the Council, were dated at Whitehall 15th March, 1594, for two several comedies or interludes showed by them before Her Majesty at Christmas time last past, viz., upon St. Stephen's Day and Innocents' Day, £13 6s. 8d.; and by way of Her Majesty's reward, £6 13s 4d.

In 1596 "a petition was presented to the Council by Lady Russel, Lord Hunsdon, and others, complaining of the nuisance of Burbage's new play-house," when the following memorial was presented by the players: "Thomas Pope, Richard Burbage, John Hemmings, Augustine Phillip, William Shakspeare, William Kempe, William Sly, Nicolas

Tooley, and others, owners and players of the Blackfriars Theatre, to the Council for permission to finish the reparations and alterations at that Theatre begun at their own expense, the same being objected to by certain inhabitants of Blackfriars who wish the Theatre to be closed, should be ruined if they could not use Blackfriars for their winter performances, as they can only use their new-built house on the bank-side called the Globe in the summer season, would then be unable to practise themselves in plays when called on to perform for the recreation and solace of Her Majesty, and her honourable Court, as they have been hitherto accustomed."

There is really nothing remarkable in this memorial. It is not signed, or in any manner distinguished as a separate act of Shakspeare's, yet appended to it is a paper in this doleful and remarkable form :—

"Sir F. Palgrave, Sir Frederick Madden, I. S. Brewer, Thomas Hardy, and N. E. S. A. Hamilton, declared this to be a forgery."

The Master of the Rolls (Sir John Romilly), 3rd February, 1860, solemnly recorded their united opinions. But these learned men very curiously have made a remarkable blunder. Robert Lemon, one of the deputy keepers, found the document next to be cited, which is unquestionably authentic and which, with the petition of the inhabitants (which is also of undeniable validity), proves its authenticity; and Lemon appended to it a counter document that in his opinion it was genuine.

One would have thought that the best thing to be done was to cover up the mare's nest which had been discovered by these great men, by suppressing or pulping their erroneous judgment. (Pulping is the mode by which the national records are got rid of.) But no, a further note was appended by the Master of the Rolls, which was thought so important that the whole series is actually printed in the "Domestic Papers," although usually that series is not given to recording jokes. "The Master of the Rolls was not aware of Mr. Lemon's addition till the 4th of April, 1868." What happened upon the 4th (or was it the 1st ?) of April is not known. Probably poor

Mr. Lemon (with all the rest of the valuables in the office at that date) was pulped.

The order of the Council is almost as amusing as the Master of the Rolls' solemn decisions. The London County Council may learn something from it.

"22nd June, 1600. Complaints have been made of many houses erected in the city for common stage plays, and lately of a like house building (in Golden Lane), by Edward Allen, a servant of the Lord Admiral. The use of plays not being ill in itself may with good order be suffered, and Her Majesty being pleased at some time to take delight and recreation in the sight and hearing of them, order is fit to be taken for allowance of such persons as are thought meetest to yield Her Majesty recreation and delight. It is ordered that there shall be about the city two houses and no more—one in Surrey on the bank side, and another in Middlesex. And the Lords being informed by Edward Tilney, Master of the Revels, that the house to be built by Edward Allen is instead of the Curtain, it is ordered that Allen's house shall be the house allowed in Middlesex; for the house in Surrey the company of players being the servants of the Lord Chamberlain, made choice of the Globe, which was accordingly allowed."

CHAPTER X.

"Nothing extenuate, nor aught set down in malice."

THERE is one act in the life of William Shakspeare which a candid historian cannot pass over in silence, especially one who firmly believes, and would as strongly maintain, that he was a Catholic bred and born, and, as his works attest, a true believer in the sublime doctrines of the Church ; and that is that he on one occasion trafficked with church plunder. It seems clear that the Poet made a large investment in the great tithes of Stratford.

Now it is quite clear that in doing so he only did that which almost all the great Catholic families did. Very few of them can escape the contamination of and condemnation for such conduct ; and even in Queen Mary's reign the Pope was prevailed upon to give a sort of sanction to the holders of this property, who had possession of it by purchase or otherwise, to continue in occupation, upon certain obligations to perform equivalent works of charity. Queen Mary, it is said, herself used some of the few spoils from the churches and their shrines which still remained in the treasury. The institutions were gone, and they could not be restored, and the great nobles and

nearly all the leading commonality who had been bribed with these possessions to uphold the newly invented religion were allowed to retain them upon doing what was clearly an equivalent charity in some other direction. In fact, it was generally left to the conscience of each individual, and when that is done, and the temptation is great, conscience can, alas, become very elastic.

We do not know the motives, or the intentions, with which the Poet entered into this bargain. We do know, as a fact, that the miserable endings of so many of the Church robbers, had greatly depreciated the market value of Church plunder. Only a hundred years after the great spoliation this had become very apparent, few of them having thriven, and most of them having died miserably and their offspring, too, having perished prematurely; and if the families still remained, we know that generally the then representatives were descendants of innocent members, whose fingers had not been soiled in the foul traffic; and we know that in consequence of this terrible scourging there was a disinclination to hold such property, and that the price of it was therefore low and the investment in it a good one financially. This, of course, would make the temptation to a godless and reckless man to acquire it the greater. But surely William Shakspeare was not one of them, nor were the men engaged with him in this venture of that description. They, too, were Catholics. It is quite possible, and highly probable, that the object of all of them was to restore this property to the Church, if happily that could be effected, and it was only the untimely death of the Poet which prevented him from explaining and fulfilling his intentions. The property was in the hands of Catholics when he purchased it, and as to restore it in the then state of the established Church would only be to aid that Church in the propagation of infidelity, it was obvious that the time for carrying out any intention, which would be consistent with the desires of a Catholic, had not arrived; and no one can doubt, reading the will of the Poet, as we have it, that it was made when he was not in possession of his full

faculties; though it was written a month before it was executed, it was signed in hot haste, for the numerous corrections made it imperative to have it fair copied; but this was not done—evidence that the mind of the testator had been inactive during that period, and its contents prove but too clearly that the poor maker of it had not the mental power to dispose of his property as he would have wished, or even to recognise his dearest friends. One idea alone dominated it—the punishment and disgrace of one of his daughters. It might be, indeed, that this was not the primary intention of the testator, but was only an unforeseen consequence of his determination, and that the poor testator only proposed to punish the man who had seduced his child from her allegiance to him.

Whichever way we look at it, it is a sad and miserable event. It may be of course that, seduced by the temptations of riches—so many men can steer blamelessly through poverty who sink when they come into a rich harbour—he had been led away from the grand truths and sublime doctrines which he had inculcated and practised all his life-time, and he had himself become the foul thing he had always upheld to scorn. But who can believe it? If there were a good and true man at that debased period of our history, surely William Shakspeare was the man. It seems impossible to suppose it to be otherwise, and therefore we ought to regard the one act inconsistent with his habits and principles with a broad charity, and to believe that it was done with a good intention, which was only frustrated by a melancholy catastrophe. It is quite possible that Dr. Hall, his son-in-law, and his daughter Susannah were fully aware of his intentions with regard to these tithes, and as fully determined to carry them out; and in this, doubtless, the testator could properly trust them.

CHAPTER XI.

SHAKEPERE'S WILL.

*"Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd."*
—*Hamlet.*

THE alterations to which this instrument was subjected previously to its execution render it difficult to give a complete idea of the original through the medium of typography ; but if the reader will carefully bear in mind that in the following transcript all the *italics* represent interlineations, he will be able to obtain a tolerably clear impression of this valuable record.

WILL OF WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, of Stratford-on-Avon, 1616.

Vicesimo quinto die (Januarii crossed out) Martii, anno regni domini nostri Jacobi, nunc regis Anglie, &c., decimo quarto, et Scotie xlix^o anno que Domini 1616.

I, Wm. Shackspeare—In the name of God, amen!

I, William Shackspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the countie of Warr., gent., in perfect health and memorie, God be praysed, doe make and ordayne this my last will and

testament in manner and forme following, that ys to saye:—
 First, I comend my soule into the handes of God my Creator, hoping and assuredlie believing, through thonellie merittes of Jesus Christe my Saviour to be made partaker of lyfe everlastinge, and my bodye to the earth whereof yt ys made. Item—I gyve and bequeath unto my (“sonne” crossed out) daughter Judyth one hundred and fyftie poundes of lawfull English money, to be paied unto her in manner and forme followeing, that ys to saye, one hundred poundes, *in discharge of her marriage porcion*, within one yeaere after my deceas, with consideracion after the rate of twoe shillings in the pound for soe long tyme as the same shal be unpaied unto her after my deceas, and the fyftie poundes residewe thereof upon her surrendring of, or gyving of such sufficient securitie as the overseers of this my will shall like of to surrender or graunte, all her estate and right that shall discend or come unto her after my deceas, or *that shee* nowe hath, of, in or to, one copiehold tenemente with th’appurtenaunces lyeing and being in Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid in the said countie of Warr., being parcell or holden of the mannour of Rowington, unto to my daughter Susanna Hall and her heires for ever. Item—I gyve and bequeath unto my said daughter Judith one hundred and fyftie poundes more, if shee or anie issue of her bodie be lyving att thend of three yeaeres next ensueing the daie of the date of this my will, during which tyme my executours to paie her consideracion from my deceas according to the rate aforesaid; and if she dye within the said terme without issue of her bodye, then my will ys, and I doe gyve and bequeath one hundred poundes thereof to my neece Elizabeth Hall, and the fyftie poundes to be sett fourth by my executours during the lief of my sister Johane Harte, and the use and profit thereof cominge shal be payed to my said Sister Jone, and after her deceas the said £¹ shall remaine amongst the children of my said sister equallie to be devidid amongst them; but if my said daughter Judith be lyving att th’end of the said three yeaeres, or anie yssue of her bodye, then my will ys and soe I devise and bequeath the said hundred and fyftie poundes to be sett out *by my executours and overseers*, for the best benefitt of her and her issue, and *the stock* not to be paied unto her soe long as she shal be married covert baron (“by my executours and overseers” crossed out); but my will ys that she shall have the consideration yeaerlie paied unto her during her lief, and after her deceas, the said stock and consideracion to bee paied to her children if she have anie, and if not, to her executours or assignes, she lyving the said terme after my deceas. Provided that if such husbond as she sall att thend of the said three yeaeres be married unto, or att anie after, doe sufficientlie assure unto her and thissue of her bodie landes awnswereable to the porcion by this my will gyven unto her, and to be

adjudged soe by my executours and overseers, then my will ys that the saied CL¹ shal be paied to such husbond as shall make such assurance, to his owne use. Item—I gyve and bequeath unto my saied sister Jone XX¹ and all my wearing apparrell, to be paied and delivered within one yeare after my deceas; and I doe will and devise unto her *the house* with thappurtenaunces in Stratford wherein she dwelleth, for her naturall lief, under the yearlie rent of xij^d. Item—I gyve and bequeath unto her three sonns, William Harte, . . . Harte, and Michaell Harte, fyve poundes a peece, to be payed within one yeare after my deceas (“to be set out for her within one yeare after my deceas by my executours with thadvise and direccions of my overseers, for her best proffitt until her marriage, and then the same with the increase thereof to be paied unto her” crossed out). Item—I gyve and bequeath unto (“her” crossed out) *the said Elizabeth Hall* all my plate, *except my brod silver and gilt bole*, that I now have att the date of this my will. Item—I gyve and bequeath unto the poore of Stratford aforesaid tenn poundes; to Mr. Thomas Combe my sword; to Thomas Russell, esquier, fyve poundes; and to Francis Collins, of the borough of Warr., in the countie of Warr., gent., thirteene poundes, sixe shillings, and eightpence, to be paied within one yeare after my decease. Item—I give and bequeath to (“Mr. Richard Tyler thelder” crossed out) *Hamlett Sadler* xxvj^s viij^d to buy him a ringe; to *William Raynoldes, gent.*, xxvj^s viij^d to buy him a ringe; to my godson, William Walker, xx^s in gold; to Anthonye Nashe, gent., xxvj^s viij^d; and to Mr. John Nashe, xxvj^s viij^d (“in gold” crossed out); and to my fellowes, *John Hemyngs, Richard Burbage, and Henry Cundell*, xxvj^s viij^d a peece to buy them ringes. Item—I gyve, will, bequeath, and devise unto my daughter, Susanna Hall, *for better enabling of her to performe this my will, and towards the performans thereof*, all that capitall messuage or tenemente, with thappurtenaunces, *in Stratford aforesaid*, called the Newe place, wherein I nowe dwell, and two messuages or tenementes with thappurtenaunces, scituat, lyeing, and being in Henley streete, within the borough of Stratford aforesaid; and all my barnes, stables, ochardes, gardens, landes, tenementes, and hereditamentes whatsoever, scituat, lyeing, and being, or to be had, receyved, perceyved, or taken, within the townes, hamlettes, villages, feldes, and groundes of Stratford-upon-Avon, Oldstratford, Bushopton, and Welcombe, or in anie of them in the saied Countie of Warr. And alsoe all that messuage or tenemente with thappurtenaunces wherein one John Robinson dwelleth, scituat, lyeing, and being in the Blackfriars in London nere the Wardrobe; and all other my landes, tenementes, and hereditamentes whatsoever, To have and to hold all and singuler the saied premisses with their appurtenaunces unto the saied Susanna Hall for and during the terme

of her naturall lief, and after her deceas to the first sonne of her bodie lawfullie yssueinge, and to the heires males of the bodie of the saied first sonne lawfullie yssueinge, and for defalt of such issue, to the second sonne of her bodie lawfullie issueinge, and (*"of"* crossed out) to the heires males of the bodie of the saied second sonne lawfullie yssueinge, and for defalt of such heires, to the third sonne of the bodie of the saied Susanna lawfullie yssueinge, and of the heires males of the bodie of the saied third sonne lawfullie yssueinge, and for defalt of such issue, the same soe to be and remaine to the fourth (*"sonne"* crossed out), fyfth, sixte, and seaventh sonnes of her bodie lawfullie issueing one after another, and to the heires males of the bodies of the saied fourth, fyfth, sixte and seaventh sonnes lawfullie issueing in such manner as yt ys before lymitted to be and remaine to the first, second and thirde sonns of her bodie, and to their heires males, and for defalt of such issue the saied p'miss's to be and remaine to my sayed Neece Hall and the heires males of her bodye lawfullie yssueing, and for defalt of such issue to my daughter Judith, and the heires males of her bodie lawfullie issueinge, and for defalt of such issue, to the right heires of me the saied William Shackspeare for ever.

Item—I gyve unto my wife my second best bed with the furniture.

Item—I gyve and bequeath to my saied daughter Judith my broad silver gilt bole. All the rest of my goodes, chattels, leases, plate, jewels, and household stuffe whatsoever, after my dettes and legasies paied, and my funerall expences discharged, I gyve, devise, and bequeath to my sonne-in-lawe, John Hall, gent., and my daughter Susanna, his wief, whom I ordaine and make executours of this my last will and testament. And I doe iutreat and appoint the saide Thomas Russell, esquier, and Frauncis Collins, gent., to be overseers hereof, and doe revoke all former wills and publishe this to be my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto put my (*"seale"* crossed out) *hand* the daie and yeare first above written.

By me, William Shakspere.

Witnes to the publishing hereof,

Fra. Collyns; Julius Shawe; John Robinson;
Hamnet Sadler; Robert Whattcott.

There is a melancholy interest in his will. It is not William Shakspeare's, probably, either in the sense that it represents his mind or that his hand wrote it.

It is a terrible will; it is the act of a man in a passion, who knew not what he did. It has cruelty and vindictiveness stamped upon it, generosity and forgiveness are wholly

wanting. It is unlike every sentiment and every act of the great Poet's life. What could have moved him to mark his anger so terribly ? and to die without altering and without revoking it ? It could not have been the work of anyone else—that is a forged will. The persons benefited by it would be the last to make it, and there was no one else who would have wished him to make it. It must have been his own act. Yet, if he had power to consider what effect it would have he would have seen that it could have none, that it was incapable of being carried out. He only deputed to his daughter Susannah to do what he would naturally do himself. By it, if his will could be carried out, he puts out of her happy (probably luxurious) life one of his two daughters, and leaves her to a state of penury, to a wretched pittance—the interest upon a sum of £150—she who in her father's lifetime had shared in an income of at least £1,000 a year.

It cannot be William Shakspeare's will, and yet it was proved by his own daughter and her husband, and so it must have been his. That a man, who through life had acted as the soul of charity and generosity, should brand his own memory by an act which has anger and almost ferocity stamped upon it, is proof that some great affliction had fallen upon him, or that some terrible illness had supervened, which had partially obscured his intellect, and that in truth he was partly bereft of reason. The will was drawn upon the 25th of January, and dated ; but it was not signed on that day. but a month later, and redated, and he survived a month after its execution.

This will, it is apparent on the face of it, is written under circumstances of distress and trouble ; that distress and trouble evidently being caused by the person who is so curiously dealt with in the first part of it, and so little to her advantage—the Poet's younger daughter Judith. Here is a man of large property, possessing several valuable houses, including two of the best in Stratford itself, and much land, and probably a very considerable personal estate, actually pauperising one of his children. There must have been some grave cause for this.

It has been pointed out that his wife's right to dower would amply provide for her, and she is not mentioned except in the paltry bequest of a second-best bed ; but this is the gist of it :—Everything that the testator could dispose of—lands, goods, and even plate—are left away from his wife and second daughter, except a trifling provision of £300 for that daughter, and one piece of silver plate—a broad silver-gilt bole. Everything else, amounting in value to several thousand pounds, is given to the eldest daughter (Mrs. Hall), except the rest of the plate, which probably she did not want, and that is given to her daughter, called in the will his “niece” (Elizabeth Hall), who is also interposed between the testator's two daughters in the entail of his estates, should Susannah Hall die without male issue. There is a small piece of land, copyhold of the Manor of Rowington, the position of which in Stratford is not positively known, and to half of which Judith Shakspeare would be entitled as co-heir, and to deprive her of this she is offered a sum of £50.

It has often been rashly asserted, on the authority of the old Vicar of Stratford, that the Poet died from the effects of a merry-making with his friends, Ben Jonson, Drayton, and others, on the happy occasion of the marriage of his daughter Judith. This will prove this slander to be absolutely without foundation, for there could be no happiness or merry-making upon a marriage, which evidently had caused her father to cut her off with a poor pittance for her livelihood, and of which marriage it is clear, from the will itself, he was unaware a fortnight before it had occurred. This fact is most curious—a fortnight after the will was prepared, *i.e.*, the 10th February, 1616, Judith Shakspeare married Thomas Quynye, who is said to have been an innkeeper. Yet no notice of this marriage appears in the will, and it is executed as if she were still unmarried ; and the paltry bequest of £150 is the first gift in the will. The words “sonne and” appear to have been inserted, but are crossed out, so that it is not absolutely clear that the testator was ever aware of her marriage. But there

cannot be a shadow of doubt that her projected marriage was the cause of the making of the will, and that so far from being the occasion of any merriment, the very terms of it show it was a thing of shame and disgrace. If not, why should everything be left to her elder sister, and the plate and the remainder of the real property, in case of that sister's death, be left to the testator's "niece," Elizabeth Hall, Judith only to come in for the reversion of the reality in the event of Elizabeth Hall dying without issue.

Judith Quyneye had a child baptised in the month of November following. This is no proof of that child's age, and it is sadly suggestive that her conduct was the cause of a terrible grief to her father, which probably gave him so great a shock that his mind was unhinged ; and this it was, and no merry-making, which caused his illness and eventual death. Evidently his loss of memory occurred at least a fortnight before the marriage, and probably in his terrible agony in learning that his child had followed his own and her mother's example, he had a fit of paralysis, or possibly of apoplexy, from the effects of which he never really recovered. It is not likely that his daughter would have married whilst he was in this state, had not there been urgent necessity for it. Unhappily it is but too apparent that some such misconduct was the true motive for making this will. If this be so, it is not to be wondered at that he wholly omitted to mention his wife, who in all probability had connived at the conduct of his daughter and helped to bring about the catastrophe.

That his mind was utterly unhinged on the 25th of January, when the will is made, is apparent from the omission of the names of so many persons who were most dear to him, and whom he would certainly have referred to. Why were not Ben Jonson and Drayton mentioned ? ; and even the names of Hemynge and Condell, and Burbage, the partners of his life, who had helped him to fortune, were only inserted by an after-thought and for the slightest mention of them. Had he been

himself, would he have confined his expression of his love and regard to the bequest of morning rings? This last act of the Poet's life is the saddest of all, and gives rise to feelings of regret and bitterness which cannot be suppressed.

The fact that he styled his grand-daughter—a term well-known—his “niece,” is an indication that his will was not made by one well acquainted with his family. Another curious proof occurs on the face of the will itself, which would seem to indicate that the draftsman as well as the testator was *non compos mentis*. After specifically bequeathing all his plate, except his silver and gilt bowl, otherwise disposed of, the plate is again disposed of to another legatee, although this was possibly intended to operate in the event of the death of his grand-daughter, but the regular form of such a bequest should have been “of the plate not otherwise disposed of.”

It is curious that he should give a single piece of plate to his dishonoured and degraded daughter Judith; but this probably was done in pursuance of some promise made to her in earlier times; it was hardly consistent with the pittance he left her by his will, which reduced her to a condition of life in which silver-plate would be out of place; and it would seem that he scarcely expected her husband would be worth so much, for her legacy was to be paid to him if he could settle lands upon her of an equal value. There is a singular provision—that if she survived him three years the sum of £150 so left her was to be doubled. This might mean that she was in delicate health, perhaps consumptive, and not likely to live, and the fact that all her children died in infancy seems to make this probable; or it might mean that her proposed husband should not marry her for her money, but that she should still have a little more comfort if she lived—she was then thirty-two years old.

Good Charles Knight has observed upon the opening phrases of the will, which he supposes are expressed “with far more than usual solemnity,” and writes, referring to the slander

of the Vicar of Stratford, "whatever was the immediate cause of his last illness, we may well believe that the closing scene was one of tranquillity and hope;" and that he who had sought perhaps more than any man to look beyond the material and finite things of the world should rest at last "in the peace which passeth all understanding."

This pious wish is here reproduced, because all must share in it, but our confidence is not increased by the knowledge that these words, "of more than usual solemnity," were common form, and are to be found in thousands of wills of the period. They come down a legacy from the old Catholic formula, which always included an invocation to the blessed Virgin and the whole company of Heaven to pray for the soul of the dying Testator, and to intercede with our blessed Lord on his behalf. Of like weight are the words which precede this invocation, that he was "in perfect health and memory (God be praised)." No will was made without that declaration, and, in fact, it would be invalid if it were otherwise, and it would be inserted as a matter of course.

A truer and surer hope in the poor Poet's eternal rest is to be found in the fact that his writings evince that throughout his life he had endeavoured to promote the true spirit of Christianity, the broadest charity, and the profoundest wisdom; and that when he had been compelled to deal with the worst side of our poor human nature he never made vice amiable or attractive, but clearly pointed out its repellent and repulsive characteristics, retaining his brightest colours for the exaltation of honour and virtue.

No one can read his works, following their true spirit (and rejecting the corruptions added to them), without being the better for it. That he was pure of heart is absolutely certain; and this must be the best justification for our hopes for his everlasting rest. Who shall judge, or who can understand God's ways with man? That he died with his intellect obscured (and that his last act was harsh is only proof of it), is no proof

of his real disposition ; that he remained in this terrible state of mind for two whole months is no proof that he had this determination to disinherit his daughter always before him. Had he been himself, his generous soul would have forgiven her, especially after her marriage, if, indeed, he knew of it. But it is evident and clear proof that the shock to his system had been too great for his strength, and that he never really understood the gravity of his conduct. Probably a little flickering of life caused him to remember the will, and so it was executed in hot haste.

In that, probably, divided household, where "barren hate, sour-eyed disdain and discord, had bestrewed the union of his bed with weeds so loathly, that it was only hateful," what is more likely than the wife whom he could not love had obtained an ascendancy over the mind of her youngest child, and possibly had helped her in making this union which so distressed him. There was evidently a great difference in mind between the two sisters. There is proof—which Halliwell-Phillips foolishly uses to show the ignorance of the whole family—that Judith Shakspeare was illiterate, which makes it more likely that she sided with and adhered to her more commonplace mother in all things.

One would have fondly hoped that the last acts of this great man's life had been its crowning honour, but because he died under circumstances of obscurity and gloom there is no necessity to despair. His death is only typical of so many at the time ; the fiendish conduct of the Tudors and their parasites is really responsible for it. A curse lay upon the land, the world was out of joint, and there is nothing remarkable in the fact that the best man of the time was the greatest sufferer from the consequences. Even the great rebellion, as it is called, which was then looming in the distance, was not without its benefits. Like a thunder-storm, it was designed to clear the atmosphere. But let everyone remember what it must have been to live in the time of good Queen Bess and of her successor

—the falsehood, the hypocrisy, the licentiousness of the many—and he will only wonder that so pure a flower could have blossomed in their midst. This may fairly be said of the Poet, that throughout a comparatively long life there is not recorded on sound foundation a single fact of a dishonourable character ; and that this last act, if it were apparently harsh and unkind, may have been both just and proper, and he may have intended to leave his erring daughter to the charity and discretion of her sister, upon which he could absolutely depend.

We know comparatively nothing of his last illness, except from this will, but there is reason to hope from the statement of the Archdeacon of Gloucester that he did not die without the consolations of his religion. Good priests were still hovering about, though so many had lost their lives in trying to soothe the last hours of their unfortunate brethren ; and it is unlikely that Dr. Hall, who was on terms of close and friendly intimacy with the Catholic nobility of the district—the Shrewsburys, the Ferrars, and the Throckmortons—would have allowed his wife's father to die unhoused and unaneled, though it is evident from the terms of his will that he never recovered himself sufficiently to understand or alter it ; but perhaps this was regarded as immaterial, since he had left it in the power of Mrs. Hall practically to annul it. It may be noted that the Halls were not witnesses, as they might have been in those days, and took no part in the making of it ; nor was it made by his relative, the Town Clerk.

The reference in the will to a copyhold property at Rowenton is curious. No doubt Rowenton Manor was a very extensive one, and property of it was held in many places, some as far off as at Wigston, in Leicestershire ; and it may well be that the Poet may have acquired some small property there by descent from his ancestors. This tenement was situated in Stratford, and there is clear evidence of some small purchase by the Poet himself of some such property in Stratford ; but with the difficulties before our eyes respecting the Henley Street

property it is perhaps rash to assume that this was the only property held by the Poet of that Manor, and it would be more satisfactory if the Court Rolls for the Manor for the year 1616 could be found. There are both earlier and later Rolls for this Manor at the P.R.O., but none for this year. It is said that some of them are in private hands. If earlier Rolls exist they may throw a strong light upon the history of the Shakesperes, although we know positively that the Poet's branch of the family were settled at Wroxall as early as the reign of King Edward IV., and there remained till the dissolution of the Priory.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ARDEN FAMILY.

*The softer with the shrill (some hid among the leaves,
Some in the taller trees, some on the lower greaves),
Thus sing away the morn, until the mounting sun
Through thick exhaled fogs his golden head doth run ;
And through the twisted tops of our close covert creeps
To kiss the gentle shade, this while that sweetly sleeps.*

DRAYTON.

IF the Heralds, through their blundering, have made confusion in the Shakspeare pedigree, they have been equally at fault, and with less excuse, in drawing up the pedigree of the Arden family. In the first draft of the petition by John Shakspeare to the College, Robert Arden (the Poet's maternal grandfather) is properly described as of the ancient and worshipful family of Arden, of Warwickshire, and their arms are assigned to him. But before the second grant was made, the frauds of Dethic had been discovered, and he in terror, having probably invented a pedigree for him, assigned Robert Arden to a position in the pedigree of the Cheshire family, to which he had not the slightest claim ; and it was this reason,

doubtless, which prevented the Poet from ever quartering the Arden arms, as he had a clear right to do ; of course, he would not avail himself of the blundering of the Heralds to use arms to which he had no lawful claim. The difficulty lay in proving the descent from Thomas, the brother of Sir John Arden, of Parkhall, who died 1525—no less than six descents having come from him in less than one hundred years. If the Heralds are correct, the visitation of 1621 shows that Robert Arden, of Parkhall, was then living ; his son having died previously, in 1616 ; and his grandson, Robert, being then eight years old. He was first cousin five times removed from the Poet's grandfather.

It scarcely enters into the scope of this work to give the full pedigree of the Arden family, and besides, sufficient for ordinary readers, is well-known, and it must here be briefly summarised.

In Harleian MS. 1167, fo. 57-9, in the British Museum, there is a fine pedigree of the family, beginning with Turchil, of Warwick, son of Alwynus, Sheriff of Warwick before the conquest. The following quaint note to their pedigree may be read with interest :—

“ The House of Arden is merely English, of the ancient blood of the Saxons, and they were before the conquest Lords of Warwick, and of the most part of Warwickshire ; and although they found some extraordinary favour to enjoy their lands, yet were they continually vexed by the Normans, until they were forced to forego a great part to the Earls of Warwick, and to hold the rest of them by Knight service ; from which time they lived in good accord with the Earls and in quiet with the rest.”

The account is hardly accurate, and much of it is poetical, for there are no records of suits from the time of the conquest until King Richard I. This was written at a time when the history of England was even less understood than it is at present. This Turchil, of Warwick, certainly was a great man amongst the Angles, prior to the conquest, and he married the

widow of Geoffrey II., Earl of Perch, and their daughter married Henry Beaumont, Earl of Warwick, and it was probably through this marriage that the Beaumonts succeeded to the Earldom of Warwick, and not by right of conquest, or by spoliation.

This lady, the heiress of Turchil, had a half-brother Siward, of whom little is known, from whom the Ardens of Warwickshire descend. He appears to have been a Knight in the Retinue of the Earls of Warwick, for he attested several of their charters; but in all probability a little research would show that this pre-Norman House of Warwick was not "merely" English, but was itself of Norman origin. Turchil is not an uncommon name amongst the Danes, and it is most probable that the family settled here under the famous Queen Emma, wife successively of the great Canute and of Ethelred of England, and from the great importance of the possessions of Turchil, to say nothing of his marriage, he was most probably a member of the Ducal House of Normandy.

The issue of Siward appear to have remained Lords of Rotely, in Warwickshire, and in the reign of Edward I., Sir Thomas Arden, then of Rotely, in the ninth year of that King, gave his manors and lands to Sir Thomas Arden, of Hanwell (according to their pedigree), a distant cousin, ninth in descent from their common ancestor—Henry, the son of Siward, this Sir Thomas of Rotely, would appear from the pedigree to have been the son of a bastard issue of Sir Thomas Arden, of Rotely, and not the true heir of the family, for his grandfather had a legitimate son, the ancestor of the Ardens, of Hampton-in-Arden, whose issue seems to have been passed over in favour of his distant cousin, Sir Thomas of Hanwell, so that the early portion of the pedigree would appear to require a little confirmation, and it would be curious to ascertain the author of it and the purpose for which it was contrived. It is not impossible that this is the very pedigree prepared for the Poet by Dethic the Herald, subsequently suppressed. There is an

air of poetry about it which requires a little explanation. There is, however, but little doubt that the pedigree is correct from the time of Thomas Arden, of Hanwell; that is upon the assumption that the charters cited are genuine, which is not always the case with Dethic's charters. It is clear, however, that Robert of Parkhall, *tempe* Henry VI., was then the head of the Warwickshire family. He was executed in the reign of Henry VI. for taking part with Richard, Duke of York. His son Walter was restored in blood by Edward IV.; he had five sons—Sir John (just mentioned), Martin, Thomas, Robert, and Henry—the three first of whom were mentioned in his will; and Sir John Arden also mentions his brother, Thomas, in his will dated 1525.

Now the Subsidy Rolls for that year, 14th and 15th Henry VIII. (¹⁹²/₁₂₈) show that Thomas Arden was assessed on £12, and Robert Arden on £8, both for Aston Cantlowe; and the Subsidy Rolls for 38 Henry VIII. (¹⁹²/₁₇₉) show that Thomas Arden "squire" was assessed on £80, and a Simon Arden for £8. This Simon was, probably, living in 3 Edward VI., and was a great nephew of Thomas, but his history is immaterial except in raising a presumption of relationship with the Park Hall family, to whom he clearly belonged; for the descent of the Poet's grandfather as son of this "squire" Thomas is quite clear, and consequently he had a right to bear arms.

This is absolutely proved by a record which must, it would seem, have passed through the hands of Halliwell-Phillips, for it is still amongst the Corporation Records of Stratford-on-Avon, and it is included in the folio calendar published by himself; but, like most of Halliwell-Phillips' work, it is slurred over; and consequently Hunter and others were thrown off the scent. Malone actually invented a father for Robert in another Robert, in order to prove the connection—a purely gratuitous invention, for such a person never existed—and this gentleman Hunter summarily extinguished. The deed containing the

following words ; those printed in italics are actually omitted in Halliwell-Phillips' wonderful calendar :—

Records of the Corporation of S-upon-A.

Miscellaneous Documents, Vol. 2, No. 83. A grant by John Mayowe, of Snytterfeld, to Robert Throckmorton, *Armiger*, Thomas Trussell, *of Billesley*, Roger Reynolds, *of Henley-in-Arden*, William Wodde, *of Woodhouse*, Thomas Arderne, *of Wilmecote*, and Robert Arderne [*son of the s^d. Thomas*] of an estate at Snitterfield, 16 Hen., vii.

WITNESSES.—*John Wagstaffe, of Aston Cannutelowe ; Robert Porter, of Snytterfeld ; Richard Russheby, of same ; Rich^d. Atkyns, of Wylmecote ; John Alcokkes, of Newenham ; et alijs.*

(The author is indebted to Mr. Richard Savage for this abstract.)

French asserts (page 406) that Thomas Arden was seated at Aston Cantlow in 1501, but without giving his proof. He does indeed refer to his "Appendix C, Aston Cantlowe," but that, unfortunately, does not give the authority, unless it is to be found in an account of the charity lands there referred to. Here there is about as clear a pedigree as it is possible to deduce when descent is traced through a younger brother who never came to the paternal inheritance ; and this gives a splendid pedigree for the Poet on his mother's side. Mary Arden was a descendant of one of the most ancient and worthy families to be found in England. A true Gael, or "Angle," noble in rank before the Conquest, or one whom our ignorant schoolmen would call an Anglo-Saxon ; and it will be seen, too, that the mother of Thomas Arden came from a race of a sturdy English family of whom Englishmen were once proud, though in these days of corruption and subserviency his name had better not be mentioned—John Hamden, the patriot, who was thus near akin to the great Poet, and his contemporary ; possibly it was from a study of the works of Shakspeare that Hamden schooled himself in the paths of honour and independence.

This deed is very clearly that of the Poet's ancestors, for it is a conveyance to Robert Arden and to Thomas, his father, of the two sixth parts of Mayowes land in Snitterfield ; and Mary Arden, the Poet's mother, became entitled to one-seventh of these two-sixths as one of the seven daughters and co-heirs of her father ; and the Poet's father and his uncle, Henry Shakspeare, in 1597, were called as witnesses in a law suit brought by the Mayowes about this very property. Yet the Rev. Mr. Dyce, in his life of the Poet, without the slightest warrant, asserts that there was no evidence that Robert Arden ever held a status in society higher than that of an ordinary husbandman. Here is the clearest proof that his father held the rank of Squire, and was assessed at the very large sum of £80, showing him to be a man of great wealth at the period. To show his status by comparison, John Littleton, the ancestor of Lord Cobham, was only assessed upon the sum of £52, and at the same period the Blunts, of Soddington, were taxed upon £40, and the family of Astley at £26.

In a Court Roll of Barston, 1 Edward VI., Robert Arden held a tenement at Balsall, and in the following year John Shakeshaft was on the jury there.

There is also some evidence to be gathered from the Court Rolls of the College of the Blessed Mary the Virgin of Warwick ; in 17 Henry VIII., Thomas Arden was fined for want of suit of Court, and in 25 Henry VIII. and the following Courts, Richard Shakspeare and Robert Arden were both fined. Probably Thomas had disposed of his Snitterfield property to Richard Shakspeare, for he was alive in 38 Henry VIII., unless, as is sometimes done, his name was retained as tenant for an assessment, although his son had come into possession as his heir.

Halliwell-Phillips, of course, has some absurd remarks upon the matter. He writes : " Robert Arden was a farmer and nothing more ; a worthy fellow, whose main anxiety centred in the welfare of his family, and who had no desire to emulate,

however remotely, the position of a country gentleman." And he adds confidently : " Mary occasionally assisted in the more robust occupations of the field. Their existence was rather after the manner of pigs than that of human beings."

And this magnificent pig-driver, Halliwell-Phillips, assumes to himself the control of all thought upon the matter. Forbid it, ye Gods ! Such a groveller is not worthy to write about a beautiful girl of a noble family, the beloved mother of the finest poet who ever lived in the world.

CHAPTER XIII.

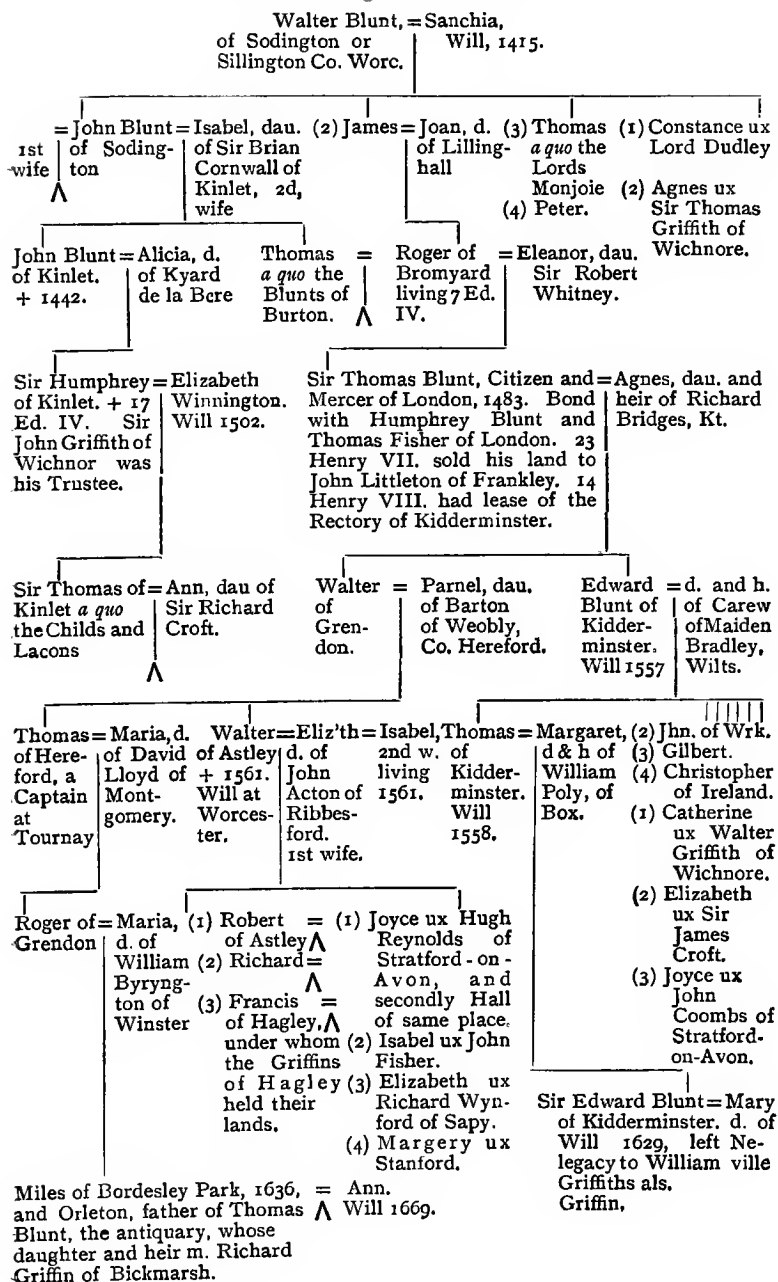
THE BLUNTS OF KIDDERMINSTER.

*"Welcome, Sir Walter Blunt; and would to God
You were of our determination!
Some of us love you well; and even those some
Envy your great deservings and good name,
Because you are not of our quality
But stand against us like an enemy."*

—King Henry IV., Part I., S. IV., 3.

THE ancient family of Blunt of Soddington, several of whom Shakspere mentions in his plays, with their wide-spreading branches in Worcestershire and Herefordshire, were closely connected with the Shaksperes and Griffins, and with several families allied to them. This will be seen at a glance from the following pedigree.

From a very early period they intermarried with the Griffiths, of Wichnore. Sir Thomas Griffith, in the time of Richard II., married, as some accounts state, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Humphrey Blunt. This probably should be Ann, the



daughter of Sir Walter Blunt, of Sodington; but that pedigree, notwithstanding the fine book written about it by Croke, is in a truly deplorable condition, and nearly every portion of it is in confusion. Sir John Griffith, of Wichnore, *tempe* Henry IV., was a Trustee upon the marriage of Sir Humphrey Blunt, of Kinlet. He was not his son-in-law, but his second cousin. The most important connection with the families under discussion is with a branch of the family settled at Kidderminster, and descended from Sir Thomas Blunt, Knight, also a second cousin of Sir Humphrey, who sold his Worcestershire estates to the Littletons, of Frankley, about Henry VII.

Through the kindness of the Lord Viscount Cobham, of Hagley, the author is enabled to give a note of a charter of 2nd December, 23 Henry VII., from Thomas Blunt, Citizen and Mercer, of London, to John Littleton, of Frankly, of lands in Arley and Kinvar. (No. 73 is the list made by Mr. Amphlet, of Clent); and No. 74 in the same list is a deed from John St. Leger, of Hagley, to Francis Blunt, then of Hartlebury, being a settlement of disputes between them respecting a lease of Hagley, granted by Ann St. Leger, widow of Sir George, to Francis Blunt, for 53 years.

This Francis Blunt was son of Walter Blunt, of Astley, and he seems to have resided at Hartlebury, and to have lived at Hagley afterwards. He was buried there in 1563; and the registers of Hagley show that Mary Blunt married Walter Harper there, whose family migrated to Derbyshire; and one of whose descendants was the second wife of the first Lord Griffin of Dingley. The widow of Francis Blunt was buried at Hagley in 1589.

Sir Thomas Blunt, by Agnes, daughter of Sir Richard Bridges, had two sons (with other issue)—Walter, of Grendon; and Edward, of Kidderminster. The first had issue, Thomas of Hereford, whose great grandson was the famous lawyer—Thomas Blunt—one of the greatest antiquaries England has ever produced. He adhered, as so many of his family have

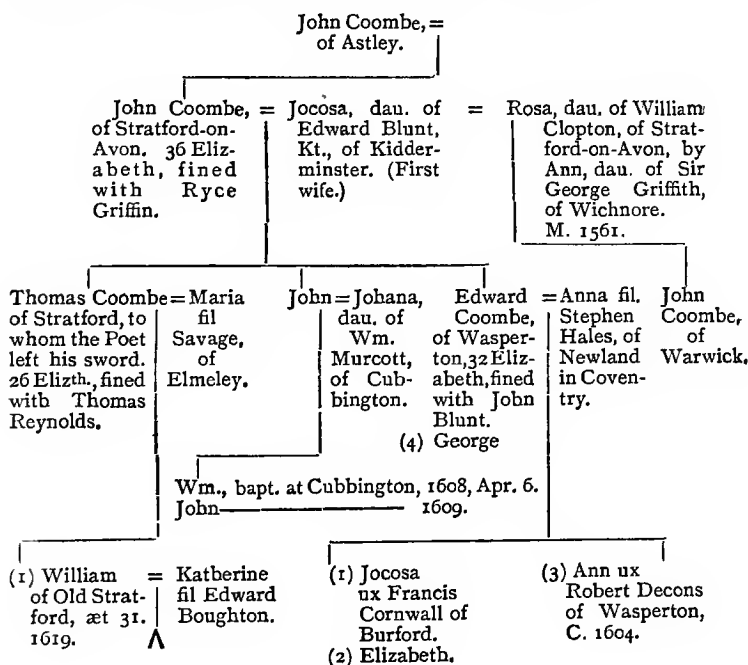
done and still do, to the old religion, and his career at the Bar was spoilt ; and he was left only to study and produce valuable books (which nobody reads), and which are now nearly forgotten. He left behind him, in MS., a history of Herefordshire, one volume of which only can now be found ; the other was lost or mislaid (lent, it is said, to one of the Cornwall family) and cannot be discovered ; it is much wanted for the purpose of a history of the County now in preparation. Thomas Blunt seems to have been a timid man, and he died from the terror and anxieties of the Catholic persecutions, which, in his day, culminated in the plots of Titus Oates. His only daughter and heiress married Richard Griffin, of Bickmarsh, but they left no issue. Another of the sons of Thomas Blunt was Walter, of Astley, who married Elizabeth, daughter of John Acton, of Ribbesford (see his pedigree hereafter), who, with his wife, died 1561 ; and his son Robert, of Astley, by his will, directed one tomb to be erected in honour of his father and mother, and another for himself and his wife ; these tombs still exist in Astley Church, and are very fine specimens of the work of that period. Walter Blunt, of Astley, had four daughters, two of them of interest to this work :—Joyce, who married first Hugh Reynolds, of Stratford-on-Avon ; and secondly, one Hall, of the same place (probably an ancestor of Dr. Hall, the Poet's son-in-law, and the vendor of the Poet's birthplace) ; a second daughter married John Fisher ; others were Margery Stanford and Elizabeth Wynford. There was a marriage at Hagley, in 1851, between William Gryffyn and Alse Reynolds, which probably is another connection between Stratford-on-Avon and that place, and with the families of Gryffyn and the relations of Shakspeare, but his place in the Griffin pedigree has not been found.

The younger son of Sir Thomas Blunt, the mercer, settled in Kidderminster, and died there in 1557, leaving a numerous family—Thomas, of Kidderminster, who succeeded him ; John, of Warwick ; Gilbert ; Christopher, who married the widow of Lord Brabazon, and left issue several sons, settled in Ireland ;

and Fulk, who was slain in London by Sir Thomas Wise, the Lord Mayor.

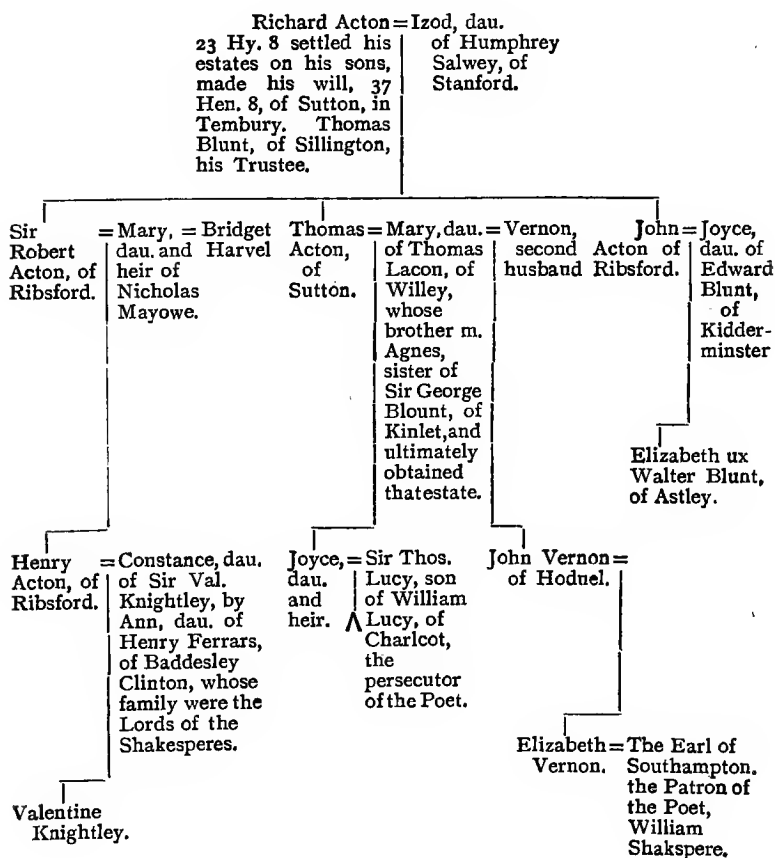
Thomas, of Kidderminster, married Margaret, daughter and heir of William Poley, of Box, in Suffolk, and left a numerous family; Sir Edward, of Kidderminster, the eldest son of Thomas Blunt, married first Mary Neville, and secondly Maria Wigmore. Clement Throckmorton, of Haseley, the patron and friend of the Shaksperes, married Catherine daughter of Edward Neville; whilst John, their son, married Dorothy Vernon.

It will be seen from the following pedigree of Coombe how closely the Blunts and the Coombes were connected with the Shaksperes and the Griffins, and their connections.



The Coombe family appear to have come immediately from Astley, the seat of the Blunts, which may account for the frequent marriages between them, but in all probability they

were descended from the Coombes, of Wroxall. The following pedigree of the Acton family will show how many of the Stratford-on-Avon families were connected with each other, and with the connections of the Shaksperes. It is offered tentatively, especially with respect to John Acton, of Ribsford, who was very possibly the brother and not the son of Richard Acton, of Sutton.



Hazeley Court Rolls. (P.R.O.) Portf. 207.

No. 94 (17 Edward III.). Richard le Smyth, of Hazeley.

No. 97 (8 Henry V.). Richard Smyth, of Hazeley, John Coombe, and Alice Coombe.

No. 97 (8 Henry V.). Edward fit Richard Smyth, of Hazeley, took a place called Crossfield in reversion after the death of Katherine, his mother, with remainder to his brother Henry. (The Shaksperes, of Wroxall, held land in Crossfields.)

Inq. p.m. 12th October, 3 Elizabeth. Dame Agnes Smyth, of Wootton Wawen, widow of Sir John Smyth, one of the Barons of the Exchequer, one of the sisters and heirs of Thomas Harvell, son and heir of John Harvell, of Shottery, esq. Her sisters were: Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Stede; Ann, wife of James Clifford; and Bridget, wife of Thomas Acton. Her daughter was wife of Sir Edward Griffin, A.G.

5th February, 1560, by her will, Dame Agnes Smyth, leaves a legacy to Ann Griffin, daughter of her daughter Bridget, wife of Edward Griffin, whom she requests to be good to her children.

Bridget Smyth (2nd), wife of Sir Edward Griffin, A.G., was the widow of one Levison, and her marriage settlements were dated 5 Edward VI. She left only one child, Ann Griffin, who was living at her father's death, in 1576. (Funeral Certificate, College of Arms).

Pasc. 7 Elizabeth. John Sadler fined with John Coombe and Rose, his wife, for a messuage in Stratford-on-Avon; and 12 Elizabeth, with Johanna, his wife, with Thomas Taylor for 3 messuages in the same.

Pasc. 12 Elizabeth. John Coombe and Ellis, his wife, fined with Lewis Greville and Thomasina, his wife, for land in Ryen Clifford.

Trin. 26 Elizabeth. Thomas Coombe fined with Thomas Reynolds for land in old Stratford.

Pasc. 32 Elizabeth. John Blunt fined with Edward Coombe for the Manors of Crowle and Hoddington, Worcester, and Ryen Clifford, Warwick.

Pasc. 35 Elizabeth. William Coombe fined with Ryce Griffyn for land in Old Stratford.

Trin. 35 Elizabeth. William Coombe fined with Ryce Gryffyn and Margaret, his wife, for 107 acres of land and 20 acres pasture in Old Stratford, with warranty against Edward Griffin, brother of Richard, and heirs of Edward Griffin, his father, deceased.

Pasc. 36 Elizabeth. John Coombe fined with Ryce Griffin and Margaret, his wife, for 20 acres mead and 40 acres pasture, in Old Stratford, Stratford-on-Avon, and Bishops Hampton; with warranty against Edward Griffin.

1597. Edward Coombe died, 20th June. Joyce, wife of John Garner, Ann and Elizabeth Coombe, his daughters and coheirs, sold his land to Thomas Coombe, their uncle, for £15.

Hil. 45 Elizabeth. John Coombe bought land from William Clopton, in Ingon and Bishops Hampton.

Hil. 1 James I. John Coombe bought land in Tyddington and Alveston, or Alston, from William Tayler and Richard Lorde and Anna, his wife.

34 Henry VIII. Sir Edward Knightly died, and was succeeded by Sir Valentine Knightly, his son, in 4 and 5 Philip and Mary, he had license to alienate the Manors of Hardwick Priors and Marston to Sir John Spencer and Sir Edward Griffin, A.G., which, tempe Elizabeth, they granted to Ralf Blunt, a servant of Sir Valentine's. From this Ralf Blunt it is suggested that Edward Blunt, the publisher of the Shakspeare folio, descended. Some time previously, namely in Mich. 5 and 6 Philip and Mary. Ralf Blunt had fined with Valentine Knightley for the Manor of Cranboro' (Grenburg?)

Trin. 5 Elizabeth. Thomas Nicols fined with Ralf Blunt and Jocosa, his wife, for land in Carsley, in Coventry, and elsewhere, Warwick.

Mich. 12 and 13 Elizabeth. Edmund Knightly fined with Ralf Blunt and Johanna, his wife, for the Manor of Grenburg.

It must be mentioned that this Ralf Blunt cannot be affiliated to the Blunts of Worcestershire, and these extracts are given because they not only aid in building up the pedigree of the Warwickshire Blunts, of which little is known, but they may tend to identify the publisher of some of Shakspeare's works, who bore the same Christian and surname.

This Edward Blunt, publisher and printer, of the Black Bear, St. Paul's Churchyard, was a bookseller of respectability, and in some respects a man of letters. He was the son of Ralf Blunt, merchant tailor, of London, who was apprenticed to William Ponsonby in 1578, and made free in 1588. Many well-written dedications and prefaces bear his name. Robert Allot obtained his copyrights. In 1632 he printed the second folio, and then was of the Black Bear, formerly Blunt's premises. Probably his father, Ralf Blunt, was a son of that Ralf Blunt who purchased Hardwick Priors and Marston from Sir Edward Griffin, A.G., and Sir John Spencer. From his Warwickshire connections he would be able to treat with Burbage, also a Warwickshire man, and with Hemyng and Condell; in fact, the Poet's company included many Warwickshire men, and they would be glad to co-operate with their fellow-countrymen in so worthy an undertaking.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GRIFFIN PEDIGREE,

*"He sends you this most memorable line,
In every branch truly demonstrated,
Willing you overlook this pedigree."*
—King Henry V., II., 1.

IT may interest some readers to learn how the discovery of the close connection between the families of Shakspeare and Griffin was made; it was the result of a pure accident. The author was searching at Northampton Probate Registry for material to illustrate the history of the Griffin family of that county, and the first will he came to (see the calendar of Northampton wills published by the Record Society) was that of one Francis Griffin, of Braybrook, dated 26th February, 37 Henry VIII., in which he refers to his sister, Alys Shakspeare; and curiously this was the only will of the family which emanated from that place; nearly all the Griffin wills are to be found in London Registers.

In the name of God, Amen. The xxvith day of February in the xxxviith yre of ye regne of o^r Sovereine Henry the eyght bye ye g^o of God Kyng of England Fraunce and Ireland defender

of the faythe and of ye Church of Eynghland and also Ireland the supreme hede I Francis Gryffyn of Brabroke in the Countye of Northampton Gentyllman beyng vere seke in body yit under the leffe of God and p^{er} my remembras thanks be to God. Revok-
 ying all other former wylls make and ordaine thys my last wyll and testamet In man^r and forme folowyng thatt his to say fyrst I geve and bequeth my soule to almyghtie God to o^r blyssyd lady and to all the holy companye of heven my bodye to be buryd wythin the pyshe church of Cotyngam and I geve and bequeth to ye sayd pyshe Church of Cottyngh^m ye summe vi^s viii^d sterlyng—Item I geve and bequeth to mye ij sisters Annys Cromosome and Alys Shakespere the sume of xx^l sterlyngn this to saye to other of them x^l sterlyng and the same summe of xx^l to be payd to them be myne executors before ye fest of ye nativite of Seynt John ye baptist next insuyng the dayt hereof—Item I geve and bequeth to Edward Greffyn Esqwyer mye gray me^{ny}ng nagg rounyng or upon the lawnde of benefyll—Item I geve and bequeth to Ryc Greffyn Esqwyer my blacke trottyng geldyng—Item I geve and bequeth to Edmond Bacon my bay trottyng geldyng—Item I geve and bequeth to Ryc Pyrwyche mye soryll amlyng geldyn—Item I geve and bequeth to Robert Lenton my heckfordsett and the calff of the same heeford I geve and bequeth to Thomas Bradshawe—Item I geve and bequeth to Margret Wakynby Waklyn my bryndyll cow—Item I geve and bequeth to Alys Luffe mye blacke cow wyth a curtall tayll—I geve and bequeth to Wyllm Howest the summe of xl^s sterlyn—Item I geve and bequeth to Thomas Hunt mye last lendron colt—Item I geve and bequeth to Edward Goodman the sume of xl^s sterlyng—Item I geve and bequeth to Thomas Byrgeman ye summe of xl^s sterlyng—Item I geve and bequeth to Thomas Colman the summe of xl^s sterlyng—Item I geve and bequeth to Ric Holcott ye summe of xl^s sterlynge—Item I geve to Syr Ryc Huddeston Chaplene the sume of xl^s sterlyn—Item I geve and bequeth to John Rouse ye sume of xl^s sterlyn—Item I geve and bequeth to Brynenng Underwood ye sume of xl^s sterlyng—Item I geve and bequeth to Wyllm Webster ye Cooke ye sume of xl^s sterlyn. The resydue of all my goods and catells unbequethed I geve and bequeth to myne Executors whome I ordene and make Thomas Wodwarl gentyllman to be myne Executor of this my wyll and testament and he to pforme and paye all my legacys gyfts and bequests and also to paye all my detts unto soche psons as I ame indetts and I ordene and make John Pratte ye overseer of this my last wyll and testament and he to see the same and all thyngs therein contayned to be well and truly pformyd and fulfyllied In wytnes whereof I have hereunto sett mye syne manuall the daye and yere above wrytton In the presence of Rynd Greffyn Esqwyer Wyllm Page of Brabrooke Sy Ryc Hudeston Edmund Bacon with other men.

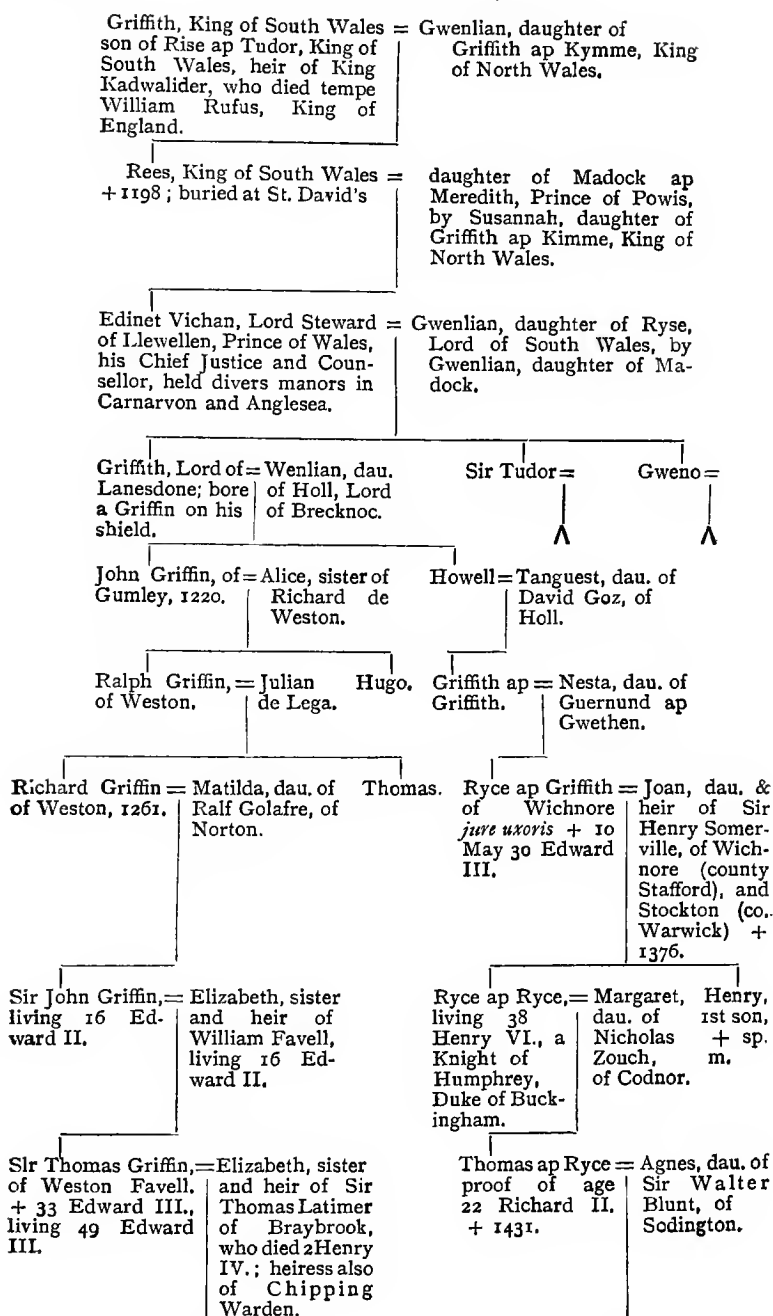
Proved xxvith die March An. Dom. 1551.

It would not appear from this will that Francis Griffin had any other connection with the County of Warwick, although he refers to his cousins, Sir Edward Griffin (afterwards Queen Mary's Attorney General), who was closely connected with the County ; and he also refers to Edmund Bacon, of a family with whom the Griffins were connected by marriage. Edmund Bacon was a trustee for Sir Edward Griffin in the reign of Edward VI., on the occasion of his second marriage. In 29 Elizabeth, Sir Robert Bacon was guardian for the children of Richard Griffin, of Warwick, who probably settled there through the marriage of Sir Edward Griffin with the daughter of Sir John Smyth, one of the Barons of the Exchequer—also a Warwickshire man, and allied by marriage to the great Lord Burleigh. There can be but little doubt that Sir Edward Griffin mainly owed his advancement to that great man, Sir Nicholas Bacon, who held the Great Seal at this period, and under whom he held his office ; and therefore there must have been a close connection between the Griffins and their connections, the Shaksperes, even with Francis Bacon (Lord Verulam), his son, as well as with the Cecils. In all probability this connection, if worked out, will lead to the discovery that Alys Griffin (grandmother of the Poet) was akin to the great Lord Bacon. What an agonising discovery for the school of Donnelly. Shakspeare, their sot, "the intelligent rustic" of Halliwell-Phillips, was not only a gentleman by descent from his mother, Mary Arden, but through Alys Griffin, his grandmother (herself a descendant of Kings) was a connection of the Burleighs and Bacons, who, it may be whispered, were but comparatively of plebian stock. And but for the fact that he was a Catholic, and was opposed to them in religion and could not hold office or practice in one of the learned professions, he might himself, like his connections, have risen to the Bench or to high offices in the State. And doubtless he would have done so, in spite of his religion if possible, but for the hereditary policy of the Cecils, who, though they were men of a certain talent themselves, could never tolerate any really brilliant man who became too popular or too

remarkable ; dull and plodding themselves, they could not brook the presence of superior men, and there is not the slightest doubt that Lord Bacon owed his fall to their malignity, solely on account of his superior ability. Beside him the Cecils were commonplace, indeed ; they were men of blood and iron, and their chief successes were achieved by the rack and torture-chamber. Their great successor of the present day, who has studied his ancestors' methods, knows full well the value of twenty years of resolute government. Hence Shakspeare, who would scorn to act as the tool of such men (or of any man who used their methods), though possibly tolerated by his great cousins and permitted to enjoy their society, yet was never of them ; and, of course, he would be bitterly opposed to those of his cousins, the Griffins, who, like so many so-called Catholics, dabbled in Church plunder. The earliest verse attributed to him was the lampoon upon Sir Thomas Lucy (the first verse of which is probably genuine) ; and the other doggerel, which is still printed on Warwickshire beer-mugs, is, in fact, a lampoon upon his cousin Ryce Griffin, Lord of Bidford, Broom, and other Manors included in it. Ryce Griffin and Sir Thomas Lucy (who was a trustee of the Griffin family for the Manor of Chipping Warden) would both become the butts of the Poet's wit, if for nothing else, because of their anti-Catholic proceedings. As Thomas Carlyle admits, we owe Shakspeare to Catholicism, so the grand inheritance of his works which he has bequeathed to us we owe to the malignity of his fellow-countrymen, and this must reconcile us to the fact that he was not successful in official life, but, happily for mankind, reserved his energies for work which will never perish.

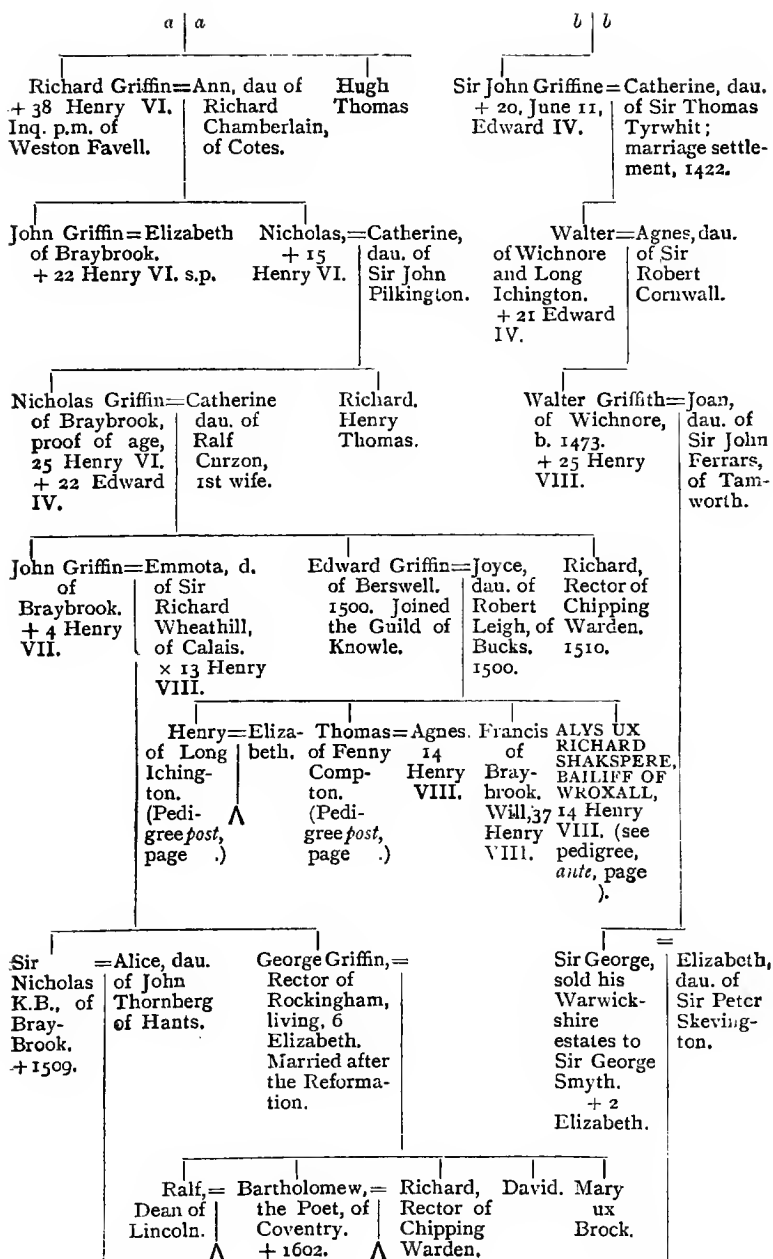
The family of Gryffyn, of Braybrook, is an extremely ancient and honourable one, and it is necessary to search in the dim light of antiquity for the first accounts of them. The Shaksperes, with whom they were allied through the marriage of Alice Gryffyn, of Braybrook, might justly be proud of her descent—it was noble, and even royal.

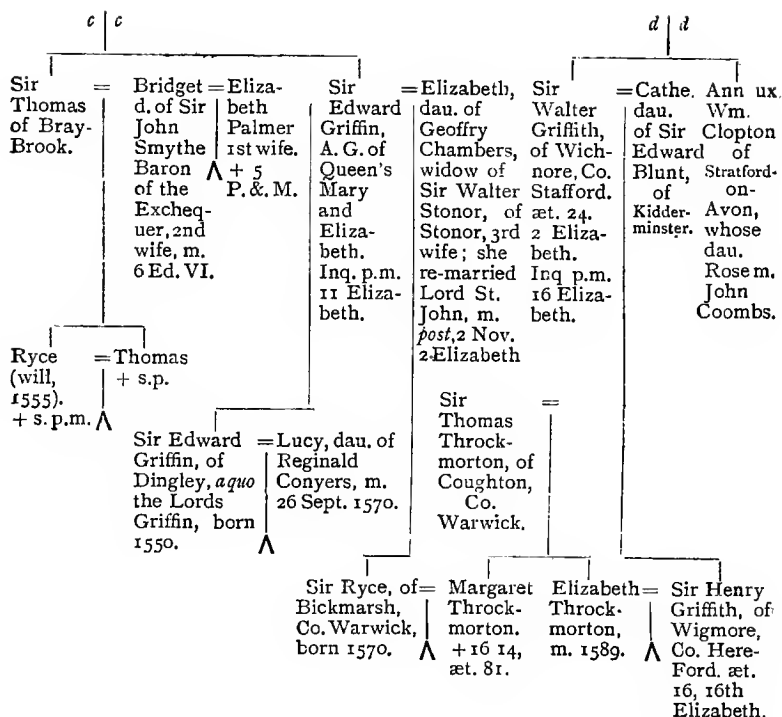
The Visitation of Cheshire, by Philpot (in the College of Arms), preserves their descent in the male line from the ancient kings of North and South Wales, and from the great King Kadwalider, who died in the time of William Rufus, King of England. Those who require an earlier account can search for themselves the veracious and peculiar histories of the great Cymric nation ; if they have a fault it is that they go rather too deeply into unknown ages, unfortunately when there are no other records to check or explain them. The details generally given are not sufficiently varied, but are rather monotonous, consisting chiefly of long strings of names ; to hear these strings of high-sounding names in the Welsh accent, sung by ancient bards, accompanied by that lovely instrument the harp, is too delicious to think of, and the learned reader must be content to leave the harps and the legends and the ancient genealogies of this great people to another time and place ; here can only be presented Philpot's more prosaic account, which, however, is sufficiently regal to satisfy the most fastidious of searchers. His account is indeed most valuable, since it shows the point of division and connection of the two great branches of the family (about the time of King John), one of which settled at Braybrook, in Northamptonshire, and the other at Wichnore, in Staffordshire. The Braybrook branch produced the Warwickshire families, and they almost invariably adopted the form of Gryffyn as their name, although they sometimes wrote the Cambrian form ; whilst the younger branch, which settled in Staffordshire, ultimately at Wichnore, possibly because being nearer their native mountains, still retained and almost invariably used the more ancient form of Griffith. May it be humbly suggested to Welsh genealogists, who are always too proud to explain anything, that the first is the Normanised form of the name ? It is believed that the true spelling of the name is Gry-ei-fydde, which, it is said, meant, in the poetical language of the Cymbri, "Strong in the faith." Poor William Shakspeare must have felt that this particular element had hardly come with the blood of the Griffins into the veins of his



a a

b b





father, though it perhaps helped him to stand out more manfully in support of his religion in his later years.

Visitation of Cheshire, 1556. Philpot 9, p. 56 (College of Arms).

A glance at this pedigree will show how curiously these two branches of the family became united, about the Poet's time, through the marriages of Sir Richard Gryffyn, of Bickmarsh, and Sir Henry Griffith, of Wigmore, County Hereford, with Margaret and Elizabeth, the daughters of Sir Thomas Throckmorton, of Coughton. Although these scions of the House of Griffin were as far divided as by ten degrees, yet both of them were closely associated with Warwickshire, and each of them must have known the Shakespeares and their relations. The Griffiths, of Wichnore, held several Manors in

the County of Warwick—at Stockton, the head of their small barony; Long Ichington, where afterwards a member of the Braybrook family settled, Napton and Shuckborough; whilst the Braybrook family kept up a direct connection with Wroxall through the grants made by their ancestors (the Westons and the Latimers, to whose estates they had succeeded), out of their Manor of Chipping Warden, not far from the confines of Warwickshire.

Unhappily the Reformation, whilst it brought great riches to this distinguished family from the spoils of the Church, brought with it also terrible trials, and those who enjoyed these spoils, although some of them flourished for a time, soon died away and their families ceased to occupy their former homes. The issue of Sir Thomas Griffin, of Braybrook, failed in the male line almost in his life-time. His eldest son, Piers, died issueless, slain at Norwich. Ryce, his second son, died in his father's life-time, having by his will devised all his estates to his male heir-at-law, subject to the payment of 800 marks "to his poor daughter Mary." Why he so styled her in his will does not appear. She was probably a lunatic like his brother (Sir Thomas' last son) who was so found by Inquisition.

And thus passed away the old house of Braybrook, for Sir Edward, the next heir and brother of Sir Thomas, who had already seated himself at Dingley had ere this, probably, pulled down Braybrook Castle, he chose to reside in the old religious house of Dingley, part of his share of Church plunder. Sir Edward was the Catholic Attorney General of Queen Mary, and he continued in office under her successor.

Unfortunately, he was not averse to the terrible vice of the times—that of absorbing the property of the poor and of the Church under the pretence of reform in religion—and in this manner he had picked up many stray pieces of property, and even some manors in Warwickshire, much of which was Church plunder; and by these means he became very rich in lands and goods. But although, like so many other families, notwith-

standing this conduct, they remained Catholic, yet they did not flourish, and in a few generations they became extinct. Nearly every descendant of Sir Edward Griffin can be traced, and can be shown to have eventually died childless ; and the fourth in descent from him, in the person of Lord Edward Griffin, perished miserably, a prisoner in the Tower. He left but two sons, one of whom died childless and the other had but one son, who failed to add to the lustre of his name, and who, after wasting the family property and much more which he inherited through his grandmother, Lady Essex Howard, of the Walden family, died without legitimate issue, the last of the chief branch of this great family, and the title became extinct. And so passed away entirely from the County of Northampton a family who had added to its lustre during a period of at least five centuries. The younger branches still remained in Warwickshire, and many of their descendants exist at the present day.

Sir Edward Griffin's widow (the Lady Stonor) at the close of Queen Elizabeth's reign nobly atoned for her husband's traffic in Church property, and at great personal risk allowed a printing press to be established at Stonor, from which issued some of the most stirring literature of the period, but all in vain. Religion had well nigh perished, and the English Reign of Terror, now called the Great Rebellion, was about to burst upon the land. Much of Father Campion's work, and especially his great work, "The Ten Reasons," was secretly printed at Stonor.

Sir Edward Griffin obtained in Warwickshire the Manor of Bickmarsh, which he entailed upon his infant son, Ryce, who was the issue of his third marriage with the Lady Stonor. She was the daughter of Geoffrey Chambers, of Stanmore, a Receiver, and she had survived two husbands—Reginald Conyers (by whom, with other children, she had Lucy, who married the eldest son of Sir Edward Griffin) and Sir Walter Stonor, Lieutenant of the Tower of London and Sheriff of Berks (26 Henry VIII.)—afterwards she married the Lord St. John, of Bletsoe. In conjunction with Sir John Spencer, of Wormleighton,

Sir Edward Griffin purchased the Manors of Fenny Compton, Hardwick Priors, and Priors Marston, which were all formerly Church property, and whereon had already been settled various members of his own family, who had obtained their holdings in the good old Catholic times from the sons of the Church, who were the best landlords the farmers of England ever had. For many centuries the good nuns of Wroxall had enjoyed rents out of the Griffin Manor of Chipping Warden, and after the marriage of Alys Gryffin with Richard Shakspeare (the steward, or bailiff, of the Priory and collector of their rents), the lands of Chipping Warden, in which the Priory of Wroxall was interested, were by Richard Shakspeare demised to one of the Gryffin family—to Sir Walter Gryffin, probably a soldier of fortune (or, as we should say, of no fortune). It is not quite clear who this knight was. He may have been Sir Walter Griffin, of Wichnore, who married a Warwickshire lady, daughter of Sir John Ferrars, of Tamworth. He is probably identical with Sir Walter Griffin, Baneret, created by Thomas Earl of Surrey, the King's Lieutenant, 13 Henry VII., whose history is lost. It is quite possible that Sir Walter Griffith, or Griffin, was only a distant cousin of the Braybrook family, since Catherine, youngest daughter of the Earl of Surrey, married Sir Rhys ap Griffith, grandson of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, K.G., of Dinevor, the ancestor of James Griffith, gentleman-usher of Queen Catherine of Arragon, into whose mouth, as we have seen, Shakspeare, in his play of *King Henry VIII.*, has placed some of his finest poetry. It would be singular, indeed, were it to turn out that the settlement in Warwickshire of this branch of the Gryffins arose from this connection with the Shaksperes, who were archers, and who may well have served under the old knight, Sir Walter Griffin, and very possibly John Shakspeare, Richard's father, may have been one of them, and possibly did receive the reward for his valour from the King, though the record of it is lost and the grant is attributed to a later King. It is a pity wholly to discredit so pleasing a tradition, and unnecessary to do so, for we know positively that the Shakesperes held land by

military service, the most honourable tenure by which land could be holden.

The following wills of the Griffins, of Braybrook and Dingley, give a complete history of their property and possessions down to the time of William Shakspeare :—

WILL OF RYCE GRIFFITH OF BRAYBROOK.

P.C.C. 15 August, 3 Edward VI. Ryce Griffithe of Braybrook (no doubt the legatee of Francis Griffin), appoints his father, Sir Thomas Griffyn, executor; and leaves all his lands to his brother, Thomas Griffith, with remainder to his uncle, Edward Griffith of Dingley, reversion to his uncle George Griffiths, and to the heirs male. To my poor daughter to have of him who is heir after my father 800 marcs, when 17. He leaves legacies :—to his mother a bracelet; to his father his best colt; to his wife, and his sisters Ann and Elizabeth; to Mr. Martin Hully, Edward Goodwin, Henry Winstoun, and to his uncle Sir Edward Griffith. (Proved 17th October, 1549.)

It will be seen how curiously Ryce Griffith spelt his own name; only in the single instance where he names his father does he spell it Gryffyn. We next have the will of his mother, who survived him several years :—

(P.C.C. Melleish 14). WILL OF DAME JANE GRIFFIN OF BRAYBROOK.

20 April, 4 and 5 Philip and Mary. (1558.) I, Dame Jane Gryffin, wife to Sir Thomas Griffin of Brabrooke, Northt., Knight, by the sufferance and consent of my husband, wish to be buried in the Parish Church of Brabrooke; various bequests to the poor of Rowell, Desborowe, Ardingworthe and Oxton, of Bramton, Dyngley and Little Bowden, of Harborowe, Fardon and Lubnam. To my nephew Edward Griffith; my god-daughter Jane Griffyn; to Thomas, Edward, and Marie Hasellrige; to Peter, Thomas, Mawde, and Isabell Lane; to Bridget Smith and her sister Frauncis Smyth; to Jane Smith; to my sons William Lane and Roger Smith; to my daughters Smith and Lane. I appoint my husband, Sir Thomas Griffyn, sole executor, and make my son Roger Smith and Sir William Dryver supervisors of my will; my husband to have the use of all my bequests during his life.

Memd^m that I, Sir Thomas Griffyn, have condescended to give the sum of 300 marks for the performance of the above will. Witnesses: Wm. Lane, R. Smyth, Wm. Driver. (Proved 14 February, 1559-60, by William Walker for Sir T. Griffin.)

(P.R.O. Wards and Liveries. XII., fol. 62.)

WILL OF SIR THOMAS GRIFFIN OF BRAYBROOK.

In the name of God, Amen, and in the fyue and twentith day of Aprill, and in the eight yere of the Raigne of our sou'aigne ladie Elizabeth, by the grace of god quene of England [etc.] and in the yere of our lord god a thousande fyue hundred sixti and sixe I sir Thomas Griffin of Brayebrooke in the countie of North^t Knight being of good and pfitte Remembraunce thank be to almighty god and consideringe with my selfe the frailtie and unctentie of this transitorie lyffe and that deathe and the tyme thereof is to all men unc'ten doe therefore hereby reuoke All former Wills and testaments by me in any wyse made and dothe hereby constitute ordeyn make and declare this onely to be my verie last Will and testament and none other in manner and forme followinge. That is to saye first as concning the dispocon of my [manors] lands tent^a and other my hereditaments my fre will mynde and intente is in manner and forme following. That is to saye I will that myne executors shall with the issues and pfittes of my mannors of Braybrooke Westonfavell and Thorplubbenham in the Countie of North^t and of the mannor of [Gomeley] in the Countie of leicester and withe the issues and pfittes of all other my lands tent^a and hereditaments in Braebroke Westonfavell Thorplubbenham and Gómeley aforesaid to be taken leuied and preyued by myne executors during the lyffe of my sonne Thomas Griffin pform my late Wyffes [last will] in all thinges according to the true meaninge of the same, and that they in any wise content and paye all and singular suche legacies and bequests whiche nowe remaine unpaid as in anywise was by her gyuen or bequeathed to my sonne Roger Smithes daughters, and to my daughter [Brigetts] children by her first husband Miles hasselrige and to her children by her husband that nowe is William Lane, Esquier, further [I will that] myne executors with thissues and pfittes of my said mannors, lands, tent^a hereditaments, and other they [*sic.*] pmissis shall forsee that my sonne Thomas Griffin and my daughter Anne Griffin be well and honestlie founde and kept during their lyues accordinge to their vocac^{on}. And further I will and [? bequeathe unto] my daughter Brigitte lane toward the keping and finding of my daughter Anne Griffin twentie poundes a yere during her lyffe to be paid yerely by myne executors of thissue and pfittes of the pmissis, and yf my said daughter lane doe die lyvinge her sister Anne, then I will [that myne] executors shall haue the kepinge of my said daughter Anne in soche manner and forme as if my said daughter lane had byne alyue, and further I will that my executors shall see my house of Braybroke during my saide sonne Thomas Griffines lieff with thissue and [pfittes] of the pmissis well and honestlie repayed and kept up and other they buildinges and houses belonginge to the same And shall foresee also the Chapell thereof

well repayred and the hall thereof well paid and seelid and towards the further pformance of [this my] last will and testament.

WILL OF SIR EDWARD GRIFFIN OF DINGLEY.

(P.C.C. Holney, 32.) 11 August, 1569. I, Edward Griffyn, of dignley, Co. North^h make the following disposition of sundry of my manors amounting near to the clear yearly value of two parts of the same. For two years after my death, in order to carry out my bequests, &c., my exors. to hold my manors of Dyngley, Little Oxendon, Corbye, Thorpyllett, and Newbottell, in the psh of Harrington, Co. North^h and all my manor of Sawley als Sallowe, Co. Derby, . . . and also my manors of Appulbye the greate, Little Appulbye, Meysham, Dannesthorpe, Shele, Overshele, Northhershell, Okelthorpe, and Lynton, in Cos. Leicester and Derby, and also the patronage and advowson of the churches of Fardon, Great Oxendon, Ashley, and Corby, Co. North^h and of Langton, Co. Leicester; . . . also my lands in Braybrocke, Co. North^h lately belonging to the dissolved monastery of Pipwell, bought from the Queen, together with the reversion after the Lady Stonor's decease (my wife) of all manors, &c., appointed for her jointure, viz., my manor of Stocke Albeney, Wilberston, great Oxendon, also all my lands and tent^s in Herboroughe and great Bowden, Co. Leicester, and such as are of her jointure in Stocke Albeney and Wylberston and Great Oxendon. My exors. shall also have for two years after my death all my purchased lands in Stoke Albeney, Wilberston, Great Oxendon, Harburghe, and great Bouden, bought since I married Lady Stonor. After the two years specified, my son Edward and his heirs male shall have all the abovementioned lands, &c., with the reversion of my wife's jointure. In default of issue from him, reversion to my son Rice Griffyn and his heirs male, and in default again to the heirs of my body and then to my right heirs. If Edward Griffyn die before his heir is 21, Rice Griffyn and my other exors. shall enjoy all the inheritance until that time, and in default of such issue, then until my son Rice shall be 21. My wife, Lady Stonnor, to have my dwelling and chief mansion house in Dingley for the bringing up of my younger children, and other lands in Dingley during the nonage of my son Edward according to the indenture of marriage between us. Provided always that in case of death of the said Edward Gryffyn without heirs male, or death of the latter without male issue, or any attempt by them to alienate any of the thus entailed lands, except by lease or for jointure of their wives,.....all title and estate shall pass away from said Edward and his heirs; and all land thus alienated, &c., shall remain to my son Rice, &c., with further remainders as above.....I bequeathe to my son Rice Griffin £5,000 for the purchase of lands, &c., to be administered by my exors during his nonage (with rem^t to

Edward Griffin and his heirs male, and then as above). After my wife's death my exors. shall receive the yearly profits of my manor of Dudcot Co. Berks, for the performance of this my last will, until my son Rice be 21; and out of this and other lands appointed to them, they shall pay my daughter Margaret, "on any marriage by way of preferment that shall take effecte," £300 to my daughter Mary, £500 if she be married to a gentleman with £200 a year, with consent of my said exors.; and to my daughter Anne, £500 if married with the advice of my exors. If they die unmarried, or without the consent of my exors, the said legacies to be spent in the purchase of lands for son Rice (with restrictions as above as to alienations). I will that John Barnard be presented to whichever of the livings of Langton (Leic.) Braybrocke, Wardon or Asheley shall fall vacant first after my death; and that Rockwood, my lady Bourghes' son, sometime parson of Odyll, be presented to the next vacancy. And I will that the residue of all my manors, &c., &c., amounting to the clear yearly value of one-third of all my lands, &c., all the estate of which I am seized of inheritance to me and my heirs male of and in the manors of Asheley, Weston next Wolland, Sutton Basset, and of and in the manors, closes and pastures of Thorpbillett and Duston, and one close in Elkington parish called Cockhilles, Co. North^t and the manor of Bigmershe, Co. Warwick.....and the manor of Sawley, Co. Derby, and lands, &c. in Desboughe, Co. North^t and the manor of Braybrocke, Wardon and Watford, Co. North^t and the manors of Gomonley Langton, Smeton, Smeton and Foxton, Co. Leic., bought of Mrs. Fryswide Strylley, and of one house in Holborne in the parish of St. Andrew's, shall descend to my son and heir, to the intent that the Queen or her heirs may take the same during the nonage of my son, or the primer season thereof.

Witnesses:—Edwd Montague, John Bavand, Wm. Yoman, Fraunc. Rawson, Fraunc. Harryson, Augustyn Christian, Wm. Haburley, Fernando Watson, Abel Makepeace.

The second part of the Will, relative to personal estate, directs (*inter alia*) that the testator shall be buried in the parish church of Dingley.

The Lady Stonnor, my wife, to have to her own use all the stock, &c., at Wakerley, Co. North^t and at Edithweston, Co. Rutland, which was hers before I married her; also the lease of Wakerley and Wakerley Wood, upon condition that Sir Walter Myldmay, Sir Thomas Nevell, Person Chamber, my wife's brother, Thomas Lete, nor my exors, shall not trouble my heirs, "regarding the performance of anything in our marriage contracts, which I know are fully satisfied, and also on condition

that my wife pays £100 to Mary Conyers towards her marriage and for her legacy by her father. The reversion after my wife's death, of the manor of Dudcott, bought by me of Sir Francis Stonnors, for my life and 21 years after my death, for my son Rice's finding.....To my son Edward or such of my heirs male as shall be 21, and shall first serve livery out of the Queen's hands, the charges of his livery." Bequests follow to the testator's daughters and household; to Sir Walter Mildemay, and Sir William Cordell, "now Master of the Rolls"; to the Countess of Pembroke; Wm. Roper; lady White, sometime wife to Sir Rauffe Warren; his nephew Roger Smyth; his sons Norwich and Keble; his nephew Thos. Hassellrigg, and godson Edward Hassellrigg; to his cousins, Thomas and Edward Roos, and his friend John Bavand. Exors., Edward and Rice Griffin, assisted by the Lady Stonor. Proved, 14 July, 1571, by William Babham, for Edward Griffin, exor.

INQUISITION POST MORTEM upon the death of Sir Edward Griffin is dated 22nd Sept. 12 Elizabeth (P. R. O. Wards and Liveries Vol. xii fo. 61). After giving a full account of all the lands and Manors. The Jury return that Sir Edward Griffin died on the 16th Dec. preceding, and that Edward Griffin, Esq., was his next son and heir, by Elizabeth his first wife, and was 20 years 5 months and 13 days old at his father's death. Thomas Griffin, son of Sir Thomas Griffin, deceased (a lunatic) was then living at Braybrook; and that on 26th September preceding Sir Edward's decease, Edward his son married Lucy, daughter of Reginald Conyers, Esq., deceased, and Lady Elizabeth Stonor, his then wife.

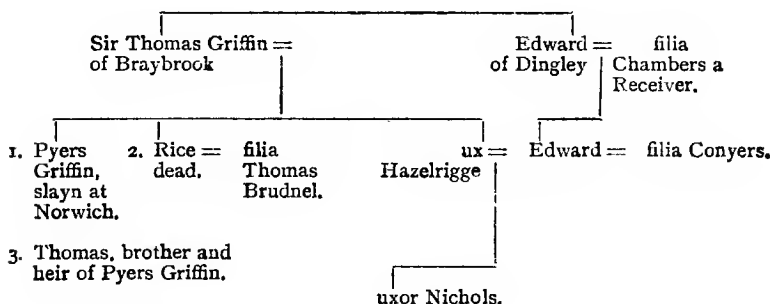
In the State Papers, Domestic, Queen Elizabeth (Record Office Publication) A° 1596, September 26th, there is a very curious letter from Queen Elizabeth to Mr. Griffin of Dingley, which shows the careful and maternal interest of the Queen for the souls (and property) of her well-to-do subjects.

The Queen to Mr. Griffin of Dingley.—Sir Thomas Gorges, gentleman of the robes, proposes a marriage between your son and his daughter. We know that others may offer more money with their daughters than he can do, and do not usually interfere in our servants' domestic affairs, but considering his long service, and that of the Marchioness his wife, a lady of the Privy Chamber well favoured by us, we remind you that in settling a child there are things to be more considered than money; as the gentleman's birth, nearness to those in our service, and favour borne him by us. We hope therefore that you will consider these things; we do not wish to use authority, but will take your compliance as a mark of respect. You may

consider our writing to you strange, considering that we were estranged from you on account of your proceedings in matters of religion, but we have lately had a good report of your loyalty and conformity, and think this alliance would confirm you in the course you have begun. (1½ pages, Draft, corrected by Cecil.)

In Cecil's own papers is another document which perhaps explains this singular letter:—

(State Papers, Queen Elizabeth, A° 1593, vol. 246, fo. 99), there are several pedigrees in the curious handwriting of Lord Burleigh, who used to employ his leisure in genealogical pursuits, apparently in order to acquire power over property; some are wholly in his handwriting, others are only noted by him; the following is entirely his. Lord Burleigh's interest in the family arose from the fact that his sister Margaret married Erasmus Smyth of Bosworth, whose brother Roger married Francis, daughter of Sir Thomas Griffin of Dingley. It is impossible to give, without a copy in facsimile, any idea of the peculiar mode used by Lord Burleigh in drafting his pedigrees.



Lord Burleigh, probably to avoid giving evidence of his interest in this jobbery, has omitted from the paper his niece (by marriage), as well as her sister Ann. What was the object of this State Paper? A knowledge of the facts make it tolerably clear; Thomas Griffin of Braybrook was a lunatic, and had been so proved by Inquisition, and the whole of the Braybrook estates, being strictly entailed in the male line,

would (if they had not already) descend to his cousin, Edward Griffin of Dingley, who was therefore a very rich man, he having a very large property besides from his father, the Attorney-General. Lord Burleigh, therefore, for some reason had an eye upon it, and Queen Elizabeth's letter was no doubt written at his dictation, with the benevolent purpose of somehow getting hold of it.

The subsequent history of the family does not fall within the scope of this book, but the following facts relating to their descendants cannot be read without interest.

The law suit which follows shews the family happiness which their great wealth brought them,—quarrels, recriminations, charges of fraud, and dissensions of every kind; it is to be feared that Queen Elizabeth approved of Edward Griffin's conduct in this suit, for two years after, when asking for his daughter's marriage, she refers to his Protestant proclivities.

(Misc. Chancery Proceedings. B. and A. Series 2. Bundle 240). 1594, April 26. Edward Gryffyn of Dyngley, Co. Northampton, Esq., and Lucy, his wife, sister and heir of Francis Conyers, Esq. deceased, son and heir of Reginald Conyers, late of Wakerley, Co. Northampton, Esq., dec^d., Complain that said Reginald Conyers was in his life-time lawfully seised, etc., of several grounds, etc., called Wakerley Parke, containing 200 acres of wood in Wakerley aforesaid, parcel of the Manor of Wakerley, and being so seised the said Reginald Conyers, by his Indentures dated 2 February, 4 and 5 Philip and Mary, for the advancement and preferment of Francis Conyers, his son, and Lucy Conyers, his daughter, the Oratrix, did demise to Edward Chambers, Clerke, and Simon Dygbye, gent., the aforesaid Park, etc., for 26 years, at the yearly rent of £20, although it was worth £60 a year, but was made at £20, and was only intended for the use of the said Francis and Lucy, and not for the lessees. About the 14th year of Elizabeth, the said Francis Conyers died, upon whose death the said Park devolved upon the Oratrix Lucy. Yet now, so it is that Elizabeth, Lady St. John, widow, late wife of Olyver, Lord St. John of Bletsoe, dec^d., and sometime wife of the said Reginald Conyers, without right or lawful title so to do, did enter into the said Parke immediately after the death of the said Reginald, who died about the first year of Elizabeth, the said Francis and Lucy being then infants of tender age, the eldest of them not

above seven years. That the said Lady Elizabeth has received all rents, etc., paying only to the Oratrix £15 yearly, withholding from Oratrix not only the premises demised to her, but also the third part of the estate she should have received at her father's death. That the said Lady St. John also possessed herself of certain household goods, etc., of the said Francis, which should have come to Oratrix on his decease. That the said Reginald Conyers purchased in his lifetime, to him and his heirs, of the Rt. Hon. William Parr, Kt., decd., then Marquis of Northampton, the Manor of Edith Weston, Co. Rutland; that he was also seized of the Manor of Ketton, Co. Rutland, both which Manors were left by his will to his son Francis, and consequently to Oratrix, Lucy, his only heir. That the said Lady St. John seized upon the Manor of Edith Weston and refused to give it up to the Oratrix, until the Orator, Edward Gryffyn, in consideration thereof had assured unto Ryce Gryffyn, son of the said Lady St. John, the Manor of Bigmarsh, Co. Warwick, being of much greater value than the Manor of Edith Weston. And after, Edward Gryffyn being forced to sell away the said Manor of Edith Weston, the Lady of St. John, seeing to her own gain, had to her own use for which the Manor of Edith Weston was sold £300 in ready money, and an annuity of £60 for 10 years after paid to her out of the lands of said Orator, Edward Gryffyn, and £40 being the yearly rent of the said Manor of Bigmarsh. That the Lady St. John caused the will of the said Reginald Conyers to be altered as follows: "I give beside to the Lady Elizabeth Stonard, my wife" (which is now the Lady St. John) "all my lands in Ketton that I die siezed of which were Mr. Greenham's." The supposed witnesses to this alteration, being called, deny signing same. That the said Olyver, Lord St. John of Bletsoe, in his life-time pretended to hold as in right of the said Lady St. John, his then wife, the said Manor of Wakerley, and they cut down wood growing thereon to the value of £1000 at least. And further, whereas the said Lady St. John being married to Edward Gryffyn, Esq., the Orator's father, and pretending to have a dowry in the Manor of Stoke and Wilberston, Co. Northampton, the said Lady St. John, in consideration of a marriage between the Orator, Edward Gryffyn, son of Edward Gryffyn her then husband, and Lucy, the Oratrix, promised to yield up her claim to the Manor of Stoke and Wilberston on the death of Edward Gryffyn, senr. That since the marriage of the Orator and the death of Edward Gryffyn, senior, the said Orator has asked the Lady St. John for the said Manor, but she refuses to give it up, and has also received large sums of rent, &c. And whereas the said Orator, Edward Gryffyn, further saith his father, Edward Gryffyn, was possessed of certain gold, in a certain casket, standing within the Castle of Brabrooke, Co. North^h to the value of £10,000 or more, and being so possessed made his last will and testament, and

appointed the said Orator and Rice Gryffyn, his brother, being then about 9 or 10 years old, his exors., and devised all his goods and chattels to the said Edward his son, while Edward Gryffyn sen^r lay on his death-bed, the said Lady St. John got the casket, broke it open, and took the gold, and took the casket broken open to her husband Mr. Gryffyn, and told him it was found so. That her husband also laid up in a chest bound with iron £5,000 for the said Rice Gryffyn his son, with which he intended to purchase lands for the said Rice, that he ordered all keys to be delivered to the Orator, Edward Gryffyn, and afterwards died. That Lady St. John took the chest, which stood in a closet at Brabrooke, and detained the keys in her possession, and took the greater part of the £5,000. That the Orator bought land to the value of £200 a year for his brother Rice. The Orators prays that the said Lady St. John be supœna'd to answer all these charges. Her answer is dated 29 January, 1594.

CHANCERY B. & A. SERIES II. $\frac{240}{16}$

Answer of Elizth., Lady St. John of Blettishe, Widow, to Bill of Complaint
 29 Jan., } *of Edward Griffin of Dyngley, Esq., and Lucye his wief.*
 1599. }

The Bill of Complaint contains so many and diverse charges that it is only devised as a "Crosse Bill, to give a shew and countenance of wronges done." As touching Wakerley Park, Ketton, Edithweston, Stouk, and Wilberston, she says that she held them as the widow of Reginald Conyers, Esq.; she in Nov. 2, 3 Eliz., married Edward Griffin, Esq. (complainant's father), who died, having made his will in Dec., 12 Eliz., appointing Edward, the Complainant, one of his executors. The Defendant married Oliver, Ld. St. John of Blettishe, in or about Feb., 13 Eliz. He died April, 23 Eliz., and Defendant was neither his executor nor administrator. Meanwhile the Complainant alone had proved and executed his father's will.

Touching the treasure supposed to be taken out of a casket, the story of Edward Griffin is absolutely false.

To give a more detailed answer, she says that about the date of the Bill of Complaint, Wakerley Park was demised to Edwd. Chamber, Clerk, and Symon Digbye, Gent., to the use of the person or persons thereto appointed under Reginald Conyers' will, *i.e.*, the Defendant, and Complainant assigned all his interest therein, as executor to his father, to said Defendant, 13 Eliz.

Amongst other reasons alleged to prove that the Manors of Kelton, &c., were left by Reginald Conyers at the disposition of Defendant, a letter is quoted from Edward Chamber, uncle of Lucy Conyers, dated 3rd Jan., 1575, regarding the

sale of part of Wakerley Park, which has been done under the trusteeship of himself and Simon Digby, to the uses appointed by her father.

Touching the service of old gold supposed to be in a caskett at Braibrooke, the Defendant says that not long after the decease of her said husband, she received advertisements that the said Complainant, Edward G., did sometymes in his unadvised moods or termes give out that said Defendant should have some gold of his father's in a caskett at charge, and said Complainant denied the speaking of such words. Afterwards Ld. St. John likewise was told that Edward Griffin "in his fitts" made use of such expressions, which Edward Griffin again denied. Defendant denies that she ever had any such casket with gold in it. And touching the chest mentioned in the legacy to Ryce Griffin, Defendant says that it never was to her remembrance in her custody, but was certain hours after the decease of Sir E. Griffin taken away by his servants, in the presence of Complainant, from Braybrook to Dingley, and was placed in Edward Griffin (the Complainant's) chamber there; and shortly after it was opened in the sight of Edward Griffin, the Complainant, the Defendant, and Sir Edwd. Mountague sitting with this Defendant a certeine space distant from him, at which time the Complainant secretly and privily (as he thought) did convey out of said chest some thinges which said Sir Edw. Mountague, being somewhat distant from him as aforesaid, did perceave to be parte of the golde or treasure contained in the said chest, at which said Edwd. M. said to Defendant that said Edward Griffin was robbing himself, "for he shall pay the legacy to Ryce Griffin every penny."

Defendant denies giving any gold or silver out of the chest, &c., &c., &c.

There is a replication by Edward and Lucy Gryffyn, to which the Lady St. John made rejoinder on the 27th November, 1594.

Passing from these wretched disputes we next have, on the 11th of July, 1755, the Bill of Complaint of the Right Hon. Elizabeth, Lady Griffin, Baroness of Braybrook, widow, against the executrix of Richard Harper, of Littleover, her ladyship's brother, and John Harper, then of Littleover, his nephew and heir, concerning a small sum of money lent to the said Richard Harper.

Mr. Cockayne (*Lancaster Herald*) in his *New Peerage* states that Elizabeth Harper, who (he supposed) claimed to be widow

of the last Lord Edward Griffin, who died 1742, was not allowed to have that rank, there being another Dowager Lady Griffin then living ; but upon its being pointed out that this lady never claimed to be the widow of the last Lord Griffin, but of his grandfather, who died in 1710, Mr. Cockayne most courteously undertook to correct his mistake in his next edition, and no doubt he will do so.

But for this Chancery suit and several others, in which this lady was involved with members of her own family (the Harpers, of Littleover), her existence, and certainly the fact of her marriage, would not have been known. When her husband, Lord Edward Griffin, adhered to King James II. at the revolution of 1688, and followed him into exile, he had a wife, the Lady Essex Howard, of Walden ; and the burial of this lady has not been discovered. She was certainly not buried in the family vault at Saffron Walden, nor yet at Dingley, although a small brass is placed in that church to her memory by a late rector of that parish, who was descended from an illegitimate son of the last lord. It is probable that Lady Essex Griffin died abroad and was buried there, whilst her husband was still in exile, and it is certain that he must have married Elizabeth Harper also during his exile, for he never was free in England after his capture. As she survived him fully sixty years, she must have been very young at the time of her marriage. Lord Edward was captured in the Frith of Forth when on board a French warship, which had once formed a portion of the English navy. He was placed immediately in the Tower, tried for high treason, and condemned to death. The merciful Queen Anne would not, however, put him to death, but tortured him by respiting him month after month, till the anxiety broke his heart, and he died, miserably, in the Tower. A broadsheet was published, purporting to be his confession, but of course it may have been the work of a foe, or possibly of a friend anxious to save his life ; but whether his or not, it had no effect in his favour, and he died a prisoner.

The Lord Griffin's narrative, or his humble thanks to Her Majesty for her gracious reprieve, which was brought to the Tower about two of the clock this morning, June the 16th, 1708 :—

As I am sentenced by due course of law, so I am sensible of the weight of my offence against Her Majesty and the Government, for which I had, amongst other sins, asked pardon of Heaven, and hope I was (and am still) in a fair way of obtaining that great and desirable end—I mean my salvation. Those who have attended me under the circumstances of death can witness for me with what humble condescension I received and submitted to the news of my sudden execution, believing in my conscience that justice of the laws, as well as the reasons of the State, did require the same, which were not to be balanced with so poor and trivial a thing as my unhappy life, of which so much already has been spent in trouble and misfortune that the rest was hardly worth even my own care or consideration.

It was my unlucky fate, indeed, to leave my country, and now to be taken, under the circumstances of rebellion against it, ; but, as I declared on my trial (that is the exhibiting of my outlawry), I was neither in arms nor in council with the enemy, but went on that unlucky expedition merely against the force of my inclinations, being ordered, or rather commanded, thereto by the French Court, from whence I had my bread, and as it became my place, being the bed-chamber to the Pretender, I never had any opinion of that design ; but what rendered it rash, dangerous, and likely to be attended with miscarriage, I was sent for in the morning from St. Germain's by his Majesty the King of France, and was told that I must prepare myself for three in the afternoon to go to Dunkirk, which orders I obeyed, and found the fleet ready to sail, on board of which I embarked, though with a very unwilling mind ; and, indeed, my prophetic thoughts answered every accident of that undertaking, more especially it gave me reason to reflect on my unwillingness when I saw myself inevitably in danger of being taken, then I recriminated on myself that a fresh exasperation of my former disgrace in this kingdom must needs lay me under utter displeasure of the Government. As I was sensible of this from the first (and expected little else but death), so I prepared myself to meet it with a constancy and resolution befitting a Christian and suitable to the

religion I profess, which is of the Church of England, from which neither the fair promises nor the eloquent persuasions I met with abroad could ever draw me. I kept my religion pure and entire, though I was unhappily seduced in other matters, and as I expected in a very few hours to be thrown into the arms of death, so the gracious reprieve I received became more surprising to me, and I am not ashamed to confess, notwithstanding my readiness to die, that the news was very endearing and welcome to my heart, though it shall not expunge from thence the happy and agreeable prospect it had entertained of another world not the sense (and danger) of my offence, though at present my breast is loaded with a grateful acknowledgment of her Majesty's goodness, whom (whether in life or death) I will comprehend in my future prayers that by her clemency has obliged me to own her the best and most merciful of princes, and nothing but the highest ingratitude can ever alter me in a just opinion of her benign goodness.

London : Printed for W. Raynor, near Charing Cross, 1708.

A copy of this broadsheet still remains in the Guildhall Library, London. It is obviously an appeal to the Protestant prejudices of Queen Anne ; most probably it was not the writing of Lord Griffin, and he was too honourable to make any false pretences, even to save his life

CHAPTER XV.

THE GRIFFINS OF LONG ICHINGTON.

WE now turn to the history of the junior members of the Griffin family, whose position in life at the time of the Reformation, and indeed long before it, was poorer in this world's goods, but far happier, for they were removed from the terrible temptation of robbing the Church and the poor; and they have indeed increased and flourished in the land, and many of their descendants are still living in and about Warwickshire and in Staffordshire. They held their property by lease and not in chief, so that no inquisitions are recorded, and they do not appear in public record as the holders of land; yet we know (chiefly from ecclesiastical records) that they were resident in the County at an early period, and we learn something about their holdings.

The Guild of Knowle gives their names, and generally in company with the Shaksperes. The first notice is of a William Griffin and Agnes, his wife, in the year 1469. He was probably of Castle Bromwych—a branch of the family whose connection

(if any) with either of the families before mentioned is unknown. But in the year 1500 Edward Griffin is twice mentioned in the same Roll—once as “Edwardus Gryffyn et Joys uxor ejus de Barkyswell,” and again as “Edwardus Gryffyn et Jocosa uxor ejus de Berswell.” This is either Berkswell or Balsall, both places situated in the old forest of Arden and not very far from Wroxall, and at both places we find traces of the Shakspere family. In 1504 Henry Griffith and Elizabeth, his wife, are mentioned in the Knowle Roll; no place is given, because probably he still resided with his father. In 1514 Thomas Griffin and Agnes, his wife, of Fenny Compton, are given, as well as John Griffin and Parnel, his wife, of Hardwick Priors; and in 1523 John Griffin, a single man, of Fenny Compton, is mentioned, together with Thomas a Wood, of Coventry, and Elizabeth, his wife. It has been stated already that Thomas a Wood married the daughter of Thomas Griffin, of Fenny Compton, and that he was closely allied to the Shaksperes, leaving a legacy to the Poet’s grandfather. Here, then, we have notice of Edward Griffin and two of his sons, Henry and Thomas. John Griffin, of Hardwick Priors, was probably the third son. The Heralds are silent about him, although they mention Francis Griffin, who seems to have remained in the old holding at Braybrook, and whose will proves their connection with the Shaksperes.

Hardwick Priors was a Manor held by the Spencers of Northampton—a family closely associated with the Griffins of Braybrook—the head of which, Sir John Spencer, was afterwards much involved in the purchase of property with Sir Edward Griffin. This place, as well as Fenny Compton, is situated close to the Manor of Chipping Warden, and in 1510 Sir Thomas Griffin, of Braybrook, appointed his great uncle Richard Griffin (who was then his own rector) to the Rectory of Chipping Warden. He took his B.A. at Oxford, 29th March, 1506; he was probably a younger son of Sir Nicolas Griffin, by his second wife, and only half-brother of Edward of Bersall. Sir Nicolas had three wives, and the Heralds

give but little information concerning his younger children; very possibly Sir Walter, who held Chipping Warden of the Priory of Wroxall, was another brother. Whether the settlement of Edward Griffin, at Berswell, was occasioned by the aid of the Rector of Chipping Warden is not clear; but seeing his close connection with the Priory, and that the Steward had married his niece, it is not difficult to account for the settlement of her brothers at Hardwick Priors, Fenny Compton, and Long Ichington, at all of which places the Priory held lands and rents.

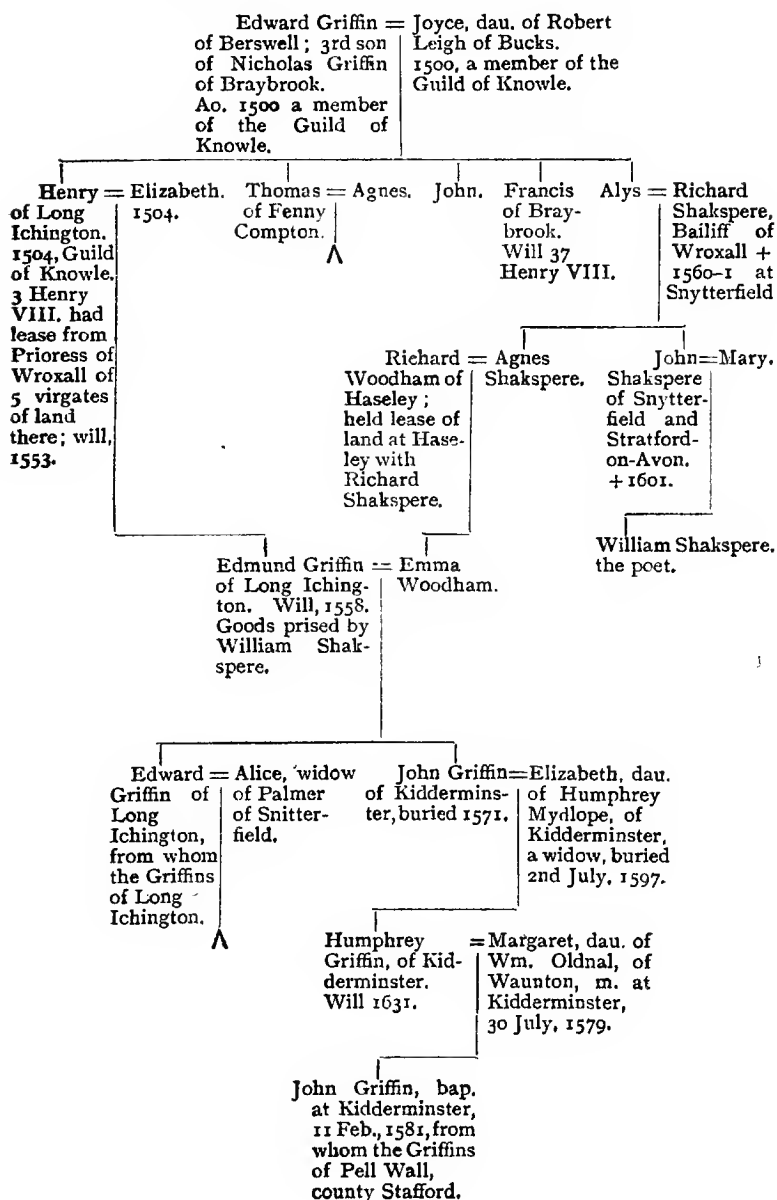
Except from their wills, mentioned presently, we know but little of the Long Ichington branch. The Heralds' visitations are silent about them; we only learn that Henry Griffin was the eldest son of Edward, the third son of Sir Nicolas Griffin of Braybrook; and, although only a husbandman, that is a tenant of Abbey lands, his posterity became, on the extinction of the male lines of the Houses of Dingley and Bickmarsh, the representative of this branch of the Princes of Powis, and they are now represented by Marten Harcourt Griffin, Esq., of Pell Wall, Staffordshire, whose seat is very curiously situated in the hundred of Piry, the first residence in England of his ancestors these Welsh Princes.

The first we learn of Henry Griffin is that he obtained, at the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, in the third year of King Henry VIII., from the Priory of Wroxall, of which the Lady Isabella Shakspeare was then Prioress, a lease for forty years, doing suit of Court at Maxstoke. His holding consisted of a messuage, a curtilage, and five virgates of land—not an inconsiderable property—at the very small rental of thirty-four shillings, besides the slight burden of doing suit at Court. When the Church robbers seized this property, this lease was recorded in the Ministers' Accounts (taken the twenty-eighth year of Henry VIII.), unlike poor Richard Shakspeare, bailiff of Wroxall, who was summarily ejected from his office and lands; perhaps in trying to save the ladies of the Priory he might have

treated the miscreants sent to invade the premises with scant courtesy, or possibly this descendant of archers gave them some of his skill and cunning in that art. However that may be, Henry Griffin, of Long Itchington, possibly through the influence of his cousin, Sir Edward Griffin, kept his farm, and, as the series of wills of this family show, they increased in wealth and acres. The Subsidy Rolls are a fair test of wealth, and they show that in 14 Henry VIII. he was assessed at £6—a fair amount at that period; that in 38 Henry VIII., Edmund, his son, had increased the assessment to £10; and in 2 Edward VI., Edward, his grandson, was assessed at £18—a very considerable amount at that period; and, as his will shows, he had spread out and amassed land in several parishes.

We know but little of Edward, father of Henry Griffin, but it is tolerably certain that in his house at Berkswell the Poet's grandfather won and wed his daughter Alys. Long Ichington, in 3 Henry VIII., was still the property of the Griffins, of Wichmore, but Henry Griffin did not hold under them. The lease was only for forty years, but it must have been renewed, for we find Edmund Griffin, his son, dying possessed of it in 1558; and Edward Griffin, probably his son, was of that place at the time of his death (1582). He left numerous descendants living at Long Ichington in the time of James II., from whom, possibly, many of the existing families are descended. From the intermarriages between these families and those of Faulkner and Croft, it is tolerably certain that they were also allied to the Blunt family.

Henry Griffin, the first settler at Long Ichington, by his will, dated 21st August, 1553, and proved the 9th April, 1554, leaves legacies to his daughters, Alyse Wythed and Johann Griffin, and appointed Edmund, his son, sole executor. It was attested by Henry Halkett, Johan Bayley, and Robert Kerby, and his goods were prized by Richard Stonley, John Bayle, and Robert Mere.

Pedigree of Griffin of Long Ichington.(See pedigree of Griffin of Braybrook, *ante* page).

Edmund, his son, by will dated 7th September, 1557, and proved 16th April, 1558, mentions John, his son; Eme, his wife; Ann, Elizabeth, and Margery, his daughters. William Odyngselles, gentleman, and his brother-in-law, Richard Wodams, overseers; attested by John Heycock and Thomas Stonley; and his goods were prized John Baily, William Shakespear, Jo. Wodam, and John Heycock.

There can be little doubt that the William Shakespear here mentioned was also the brother-in-law of Richard Wodams, and the brother or son (probably the latter) of Richard Shakspeare, then of Snitterfield, and Alys Griffin, his wife. This Richard Woodham was co-lessee with Richard Shakspeare, in 28 Henry VIII., of land in Hazeley.

It is interesting to see how the presence of both Wodhams and Shaksperes in these wills, and the A. Woods, of Hazeley, identifies the family into which Alys Griffin had married with that of the poet Shakspeare.

A very interesting branch of the Griffin family, which has come down to modern times, and which has still many representatives in Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Northampton, Bucks, and nearer London, is that of Thomas, younger brother of Henry Griffin, of Long Ichington, who settled at Fenny Compton (see pedigree of Griffin, of this place, hereafter). We have no proof of the actual settlement of this family, but there is proof from the Subsidy Rolls that they were resident there in 14 and 15 Henry VIII. In the first of the great series of Subsidy Rolls of that King's reign, Thomas Griffin (the first of the name there) held the honourable post of sub-collector, and was himself assessed at the very large sum (at that date) of £20; but, as we have seen, there is a still earlier reference to him in the Guild of Knowle, where so many of his family (including his father and brother) are recorded. In 1514 he and Agnes, his wife, as well as John Griffin, of the adjoining parish of Hardwick Priors, and Parnel his wife, and John Griffin, of Fenny Compton, a single man, are recorded upon the Roll. In

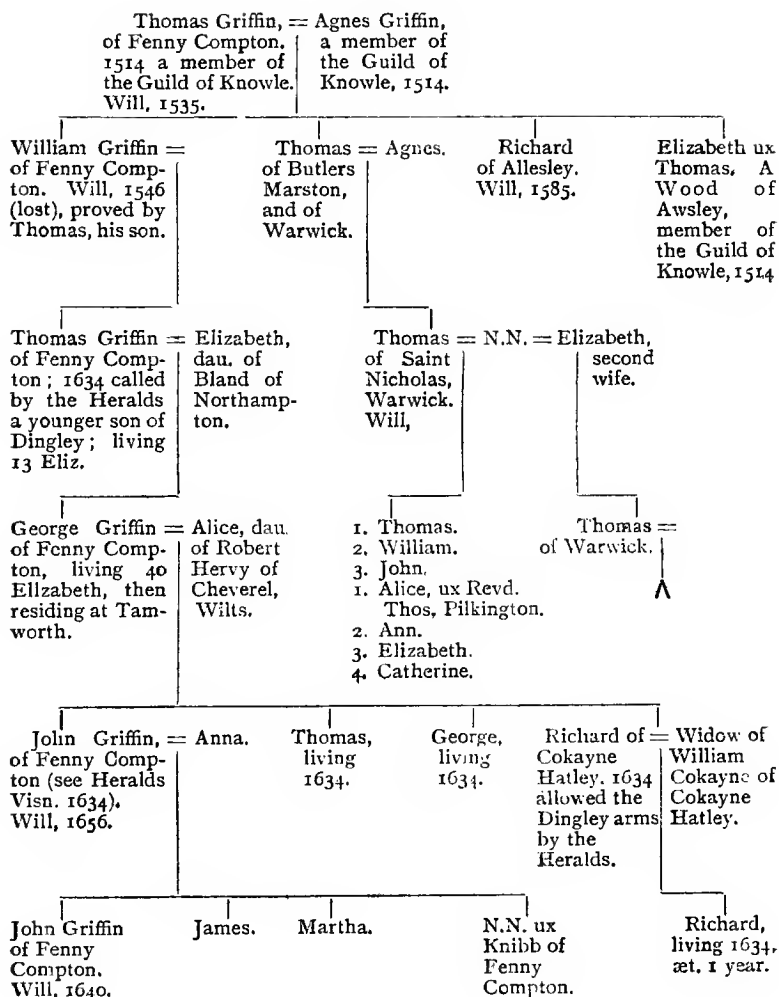
1523 is recorded the entry of Elizabeth his daughter, and Thomas a Wood, her husband—the same Thomas, doubtless, who, in 1543, left a yoke of four oxen then in his keeping to his wife's uncle, Richard Shakspeare, of Haseley, who afterwards removed to Snitterfield, and whose son was the Poet.

The descendants of this Thomas Griffin are still to be found in the pleasant country round Fenny Compton, who with royal blood in their veins are no disgrace, but an honour, to the yeomanry of England.

The following pedigree is partly taken from the Heralds' Visitation, who start with the second Thomas, and call him "a younger son of Dingley," we have the slenderest evidence to connect him with Thomas, of 14th Henry VIII.—only a statement in the Act-book at Lichfield, that the will of William Griffin, dated 1546, was proved by Thomas his son; but, coupled with the will of the first Thomas, which is fairly elaborate, and the evidence of the Subsidy Rolls, it is sufficient for the purpose. Unfortunately the Court Rolls for the Manor of Fenny Compton, as well as the Parish Registers, appear to be lost. The Manor was subsequently held by the family of Holbech, of Farnborough Hall, who still retain some of the earlier Rolls; and they prove that George Griffin, of Fenny Compton, in 1625, resided at Tamworth, the seat of the Ferrars family, under whom a branch of the Shakspeare family were so long tenants at Baddesley Clinton.

Pedigree of Thomas Griffin, of Fenny Compton, one of the brothers of Alis Shakspeare (see pedigree of Griffin, of Braybrook).

The marriage of Richard Griffin, of Fenny Compton, with the widow of William Cokayne, of Cokayne Hatley, although much later in date, assists in proving the identity of this family with that of Braybrook. Francis Cokayne married Ann, daughter of Valentine Knightley, of Fawsley, in Northamptonshire (who in 3 Elizabeth fined with Sir John Spencer and Sir

Pedigree B.

Edward Griffin, Attorney General, for Hardwick Priors), and Valentine Knightley himself married Ann, daughter of Henry Ferrars, of Baddesley Clinton, we shall see presently that at one time (35 Elizabeth) Henry Ferrar's estates were held by Ryce Griffin, of Bickmarsh. Constance, daughter of Sir Valentine Knightley, married Henry, son of Sir Robert Acton, of Ribbesford, brother of Thomas Acton, of Sutton, one of whose daughters married Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecot, the bigoted persecutor of the Catholics, and the tyrant who maltreated the Poet Shakspeare. The niece of this lady married the Earl of Southampton, who behaved as nobly to his kinsman, Shakspeare, as Sir Thomas had behaved badly.

Another branch of the Griffin family settled at Warwick, in the Parish of St. Nicholas, where they acquired considerable property through the influence, and by the grant of, Clement Throckmorton, of Hazeley, son of Sir George Thockmorton, of Coughton, a great uncle of the wives of Sir Ryce Griffin and Sir Henry Griffith. This noble man, Clement Throckmorton, seems not only to have sheltered the members of the Shakspeare family, when ruined through the rapacity of Henry VIII., but he assisted their relatives (and his own), the poorer members of the Griffin family.

The most interesting member of this family was Bartholomew Griffin, the poet, who was the son of George Griffin, who in the good old Catholic times was Rector of Rockingham, and who must have been a very old man when he married—when that glorious liberty was given him at the great reformation—for he is mentioned in the will of his brother, Sir Nicolas, in 1509, as then holding the Rectory, and in 1570 (sixty years afterwards) his nephew, Sir Edward Griffin, A.G., entailed his estates upon him and his children in default of his own issue—a devise which did not benefit him or his posterity, for Sir Edward's issue did not fail immediately. Bartholomew Griffin, curiously, though the son of a Catholic priest, himself adhered to the old faith. We hear of him at Bidford, in 1582,

obtaining a license to eat meat in Lent, and he was buried at Coventry, 15th December, 1602, at the Church of the Holy Trinity. His will was proved in London the 13th of May, 1603, by Catherine, his widow, and his son, Ryce. He bequeathed to his son £60 out of the arrears of the annuity given to him by Mr. Edward Griffin, of Dingley (son of the Attorney General), who was then living. He mentions his sister, Mary Fisher, and his brother, Thomas Pursloe.

Ralf Griffin, the elder brother of Bartholomew, the Poet, was Rector of Chipping Warden, and subsequently became Dean of Lincoln. He had probably been Rector of Bromyard, under the patronage of the Blunts. He had a son Silvanus baptised there in 1564, who is probably identical with Silvanus Griffin, Dean of Hereford; and certainly Bartholomew, another son, who subsequently became Rector of Fenny Bentley, in Derbyshire, where his descendants remained long afterwards.

There can be but little doubt that the two poets, William Shakspeare and Bartholomew Griffin, kept up their kinship in blood and in letters, both in Warwickshire and amongst the wits of London, since their poems became so intermixed that the true authorship was not properly known. Griffin wrote some exquisite poetry, but he had not the refinement and purity of morals, nor, indeed, the grand genius, of his greater cousin. Curiously, he wrote his sonnets much in the same style as those of William Shakspeare, and the pirate publishers may almost be excused for confounding them. In the *Passionate Pilgrim*, published under the name of W. Shakspeare, are to be found some very lovely sonnets of Bartholomew Griffin, who, of course, being also a Catholic, was, like Shakspeare, unable to sue the pirate or to put a stop to their publications. Unfortunately, for this reason but little of his poetry has come down to us. He appears to have been a member of one of the Inns of Court, but owing to his religion he was unable to distinguish himself at the Bar or even to practise at it.

CHAPTER XVI.

RYCE GRIFFIN OF BICKMARSH.

A VERY important member of the Griffin family, who must have been well known to the Poet, being only three or four years his senior in age, was Sir Ryce Griffin, Kt., Lord of the Manors of Bickmarsh, Exal, Bidford, and Burnels Broom, and the owner of much land in Warwickshire. By the will of his father (Sir Edward Griffin, A.G., see page 252 *ante*) in case his brother Edward should die without heirs (he did not) all the estates of the family were to come to him. As this was not probable, his father left him a legacy of £5,000 (a prodigious sum in those days) for the purchase of land during his nonage, which were to be strictly settled upon him and his brother Edward successively in tail, with remainder to the right heirs of Sir Edward Griffin, who already possessed Bickmarsh. The Executors duly proceeded to purchase lands for him, and the first moneys seem to have been invested in the purchase of the Manors of Preston Bagot, Wootton Wawen, Bidford and Broom, Burton, Marcle, Kingsham and Exall, with fisheries in the rivers Avon and Arrow. How some of these names recall the clever doggerel.

which those who believed in the anecdotes about the Poet's beer-drinking so fondly cherished. These were purchased from Clement Throckmorton and Lewis Greville, and in the following Trinity term 840^a of land and houses were bought of William Clopton and Ann, his wife, in Stratford-on-Avon, Ingon, Old Stratford, and Clopton, including, probably, some of the very lands which the Poet died seized of. These purchases were made and the fines levied when Ryce was a mere boy of nine or ten, and when he could not, properly, be cognizee of a fine, although they were confirmed in 22 Elizabeth. It has always been assumed that Ryce Griffin was the son of Sir Edward by Lady Stonor, his third wife, and this would make him only nine or ten years old at the period of these fines; and that fact is established by the Chancery suit already mentioned.

A glance at the fines next given will show that Ryce Griffin was dealing with many of the Poet's relations—with John Coombe, W. Ewyas, Thomas Hill, and William Cookes—which is at least highly suggestive of an intimate connection with them, which would be quite natural, though as a much richer man he might not be on very friendly terms with the poet himself.

The fact that Ryce Griffin was assessed in 35 Elizabeth for £20 of land in Baddesley Clinton, the same value at which his other Manors and lands were assessed, is a puzzle which the few fines found relating to this place—which was clearly a Ferrars' Manor—do not explain. Fortunately a history of Baddesley Clinton has been written, and it is hoped that it will be shortly issued, which will doubtless explain how it happened that Ryce Griffin was assessed for Henry Ferrars' land. Henry Ferrars was the famous antiquary of that name, and a strict Catholic; possibly Ryce Griffin, after the fashion of Protestant relatives, obtained possession of his land improperly on account of Ferrars' recusancy. This was a common practice at this period, and one of the worst and most deplorable consequences of the new religion. Children were tempted to betray their parents, and even to denounce them as Catholics, and then to

get a grant of their estates for themselves. Many families were torn assunder by these disgraceful intrigues, many an elder brother ejected—a worthy man, probably, who preferred his conscience to his estates, and a worthless relative, without conduct or conscience, ousted him and obtained possession of the estates for himself. This will account, probably, for the conduct of Sir Thomas Throckmorton, an upright and honourable man, who, if Henry Ferrars were thus treated—as it seems most probable—must have looked with disgust upon his son-in-law, Sir Ryce Griffin, and he would do everything in his power to punish and degrade him. It is amusing to see how the old Papist degraded Ryce Griffin's Protestant Church by his exposure—a thing he would have little difficulty in doing, so degraded had the clergy become after the establishment of the great Reformation. Instead of reforming the manners of the clergy, and improving their morality, it, in fact, degraded them below the level of domestic servants.

Star Chamber Proceeding, G. 1, 11 (*circa*. 38 Elizabeth).

Rice Gryffin, of Burnels Broom, County of Warwick, Esq., complains that he is seized in the Manor of Bidford, County of Warwick, in his demesne as of fee, and is lawfully seized of like estate of 200 acres of arable lands, meadow, and pasture, at and being in Ecclesall in the said County of Warwick, adjoining to the said Manor, part of which land in Ecclesall is parcel of your subjects demesne of the Manor of Bidford. There is also in Ecclesall a certain heath ground containing about 200 acres, which was formerly arable land, and in the said heath, and in other land adjoining your said subject and his tenants of the said lands in Ecclesall have had from time immemorial common of pasture for all manner of cattle to gaine and manure the said land. And, whereas, Sir Thomas Throckmorton, of Coughton, County of Warwick, Esq., hath also certain lands in Ecclesall, which he pretendeth to be holden of him as of his Manor of Oversley, in the said County of Warwick, and as he also pretendeth hath the like title for himself and his tenants to entercommon in the said waste accordingly. And, likewise, one Francis Burnel, gentleman, is also seized of certain lands in Ecclesall. And Sir Fulke Greville, Knight, and others are likewise seized in divers lands in Ecclesall by reason of which they have had entercommon with their

cattle in said waste in Ecclesall, and so your subject and they have always used and enjoyed the said common and heath ground with their cattle. But Thomas Throckmorton, bearing some displeasure against your subject, pretended said waste ground belonged to his Manor of Oversley, and about 28th of April 38 Elizabeth, accompanied by Morrice Walsingham, Thomas Chapman, Thomas Kempson, and various others, to the number of thirty, all armed, assembled at Oversley Park, when Throckmorton sent for your subject, having married one of the daughters of the said Thomas Throckmorton, to come to him, and not suspecting any harm, but unaccompanied and unarmed, at which time said Throckmorton maliciously picked open quarrel with your subject prohibiting and commanding him and his tenants and farmers of his land in Ecclesall aforesaid not to use or enjoy any common of pasture for their cattle on the heath or common ground in Ecclesall aforesaid. Your subject not removing his cattle from the pasture about the 9th May 38 of your Majesty's reign, sent his servants to the Parish Church of Ecclesall, and to Withlattford Chappel, to one Robert Barker, clerk, incumbent in said Church, commanding him to make open proclamation in your Majesty's name at the time of service to command all the tenants, etc., of Throckmorton to meet him, Throckmorton, on the heath at Ecclesall; on 20th July, 38 Elizabeth, Throckmorton met his tenants and servants, and advised one of his servants—Raphael Butler—to murder your subject and make a deed of gift of his goods to Throckmorton, and he prays for writs of subpœna.

Answer of the said Thomas Throckmorton, dated 15th June, 39 Elizabeth, denying the said allegations mentioned by Ryce Griffin himself. That the lands were formerly arable shows that his claim was groundless; in accordance with the new manners the labourers who tilled it had doubtless been strung up as sturdy beggars, and the land turned into a sheep walk; but this would give Ryce no right of common. Interrogatories, 9, 42, 28.

In a suit in the Court of Requests, No. 491, Gr. Gibson, 3 June 41 Elizabeth, Rice Griffin, of Burnels Broom, refers to the Lady Elizabeth St. John as his mother.

Very little is known of the Bickmarsh family; like that of Craybrook and Dingley, they lasted for three generations and.

then disappeared ; a few broken and displaced tombs in Wixford Church alone remain to attest their ancient wealth and power in the County.

Edward Griffin, son of Sir Ryce, married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Philip Draycott, but his only son who left issue was Edward, his second son, who married Ann, daughter of Richard Vaughan, of Courtfield—a fine old Catholic family which remained staunch to the true faith, and which is now represented by no less a personage than his eminence Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster. Whether they, too, were extravagant, like the Dingley family, is unknown ; but their great wealth—so much of it made out of the spoils of the Church—had vanished, and poor Ann Vaughan had a pitiable tale to tell Cromwell's commissioners in 1653. This was reported as her condition : "Ann Griffin widow, of Brickmarsh, a recusant, has to maintain old Mr. Griffin and his wife, both seventy years old, his brother (no doubt Nicolas), four sons and two daughters, a widow and three children, besides herself and children."

Of her own ten children little is known. Richard, the eldest, must have remained in the old faith, for he married the daughter and heir of that good man and great scholar, Thomas Blunt, the historian, but he left no issue. Nicholas, his brother, succeeded, but he, too, died childless, and Joseph, a London tobacconist, a man of wealth, next inherited Bickmarsh. He died childless, the last of the race, except two ancient ladies, his maiden sisters, Teresa and Winifred. Bickmarsh had evidently long ceased to be a property of value, for there was a mortgage of £3,000 (a large sum at that period) upon it, and probably was so indebted when it came to Joseph. Thus passed away the last male of the issue of the great Attorney General of Queens Mary and Elizabeth, the representative of Kings and of Princes without number.

This race, unlike the Long Ichington and Fenny Compton branches, had none of the blood of the Shaksperes in their veins.

Hil. 3 Elizabeth. Sir Edward Griffin fined with Rowland Heyward, George Basford, and Francis Bowyer for the Manor of Bickmarsh als Bigmersh for £280 ; and Pasc., in the same year Valentine Knightley fined with John Spenser, Knight, Edward Griffin, A.G. of the Queen, Richard Newport, and William Gent, for the Manor of Hardwick Priors and Merston, after the death of Ursula Knightly.

Mich. 12 and 13 Elizabeth. Ryce Griffin fined with Clement Throckmorton and Catherine, his wife, for Preston Bagot, and 20 messuages, 600 acres of land, 200 acres of mead, and 40^a arable land in Wootton Wawen ; and with Lewis Greville, for Bidford, Broom Burnel, Barston, Marcle, Kingsham, and Exall, and for fisheries in the Avon and Arowe. Confirmed, 22 Elizabeth, to same uses as the fine of William Clopton.

Trin. 13 Elizabeth. Ryce Griffin, Esq., fined with William Clopton, and Ann, his wife, for 2 messuages, 500^a land, 70 mead, 70^a pasture, 200^a wood, in Stratford, Ingon, Old Stratford, and Clopton, to him in tail, remainder to Edward his brother in tail, reversion to the right heirs of Edward Griffyn, his father.

Mich. 26 and 27 Elizabeth. Ryce Gryffyn and Margaret, his wife, and Thomas Throckmorton fined for land at Exall, Wyxford, Burnels Broom, Bydford, and Haselor, with warranty against George Skinner.

Pasc. 32 Elizabeth. Rice Griffin fined with Thomas Badger, jun., for 2 messuages, 4^a land, 6^a meadow, and 8^a pasture in Bydford and Marcliffe ; and another fine between the same parties concerning the same property was levied in Mich. 32 and 33 Elizabeth.

Mich. 34 and 35 Elizabeth. Richard Griffin fined with Edward Kemson for land in Broom and Bidford.

Hil. 35 Elizabeth. Rice Griffin fined with Robert Calcott and George Venables for land in Preston Bagot.

Pasc. 35 Elizabeth. Rice Griffin fined with Bartholomew Kighley for land in Bidford, he was also fined with Edward Greville for land in Haseley, and with William Coombe for land at Old Stratford.

Trin. 35 Elizabeth. Edward Greville fined with Ryce Gryffyn and Margaret, his wife, for 16^a pasture and 50^a wood in Haselor, with warranty against Thomas Throckmorton and Margaret, his wife, George and Anthony Skinner.

Mich. 35 and 36 Elizabeth. Thomas Spencer fined with Rice Griffin for land at Preston Bagot and Wootton Wawen.

Pasc. 36 Elizabeth. Rice Griffin fined with Bartholomew Kighley and Philip Kighley for 100^a land in Bidford.

Pasc. 36 Elizabeth. John Coombe fined with Ryce Griffin for land at Stratford-on-Avon; and Thomas Throckmorton fined with the same for land at Burnels Broom; and the same term, Edward Griffin, of Dingley, fined with Thomas Badger for land at Bidford.

Pur. B.V.M. 40 Elizabeth. Ryce Griffin and Margaret, his wife, granted 30^a land, 30^a mead, 60^a pasture, 10^a wood, and 30^a heath, together 160^a, for £200, in Ingon and Bishops Hampton, to William Cookes, gentleman.

East. 36 Elizabeth. Edward Gryffyn and Thomas Hill fined with Thomas Badger and Johanna, his wife, for a messuage and garden, 8^a land, 2^a mead, and 2^a pasture, in Bidford, Burnels Broom, and Marcliffe; and Thomas Throckmorton fined with Ryce Gryffyn and Margaret, his wife, for one water mill, 20^a meadow, 20^a pasture, 3^a wood, and 12^a water enclosed in Barnels Broom, King's Broom, and Blachford, *alias* Wychford, and a free fishery in the Arrow, with warranty against Leonard Dannett and Lewis Greville.

Trin. 42 Elizabeth. William Ewyns bought land from Richard Griffin in Marcliffe and Bidford, 3 cottages, 3 gardens, 3 orchards, 100^a land, 4^a meadow, 4^a pasture, £100.

23rd April, 1607, C.P. (B. and A.), *ante* 1714, Milford I., part 1, No. 29. Ryce Griffin, of Burnel Broom, County Warwick, Kt., complains against Cecil Hill, of Grantham, in the County of Lincoln, Esq., whose father-in-law was brother to your orator and lived at Dingley, concerning the sale of a horse. From this suit it would appear that although the marriage of Sir Edward Griffin's son with the daughter of Sir Thomas Gorges, as proposed by Lord Burleigh, had not taken place yet, that a marriage had been contracted between a daughter of Sir Edward's and a gentleman whose Christian name was Cecil.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOME DOUBTFUL POINTS.

THERE are several families, and amongst them the family of Spencer of Wormleighton, whose histories, properly investigated, would throw much light upon the history of the Shaksperes. The family of Spencer which now enjoys the Dukedom of Marlborough, as well as the Earldom of Spencer, was closely connected with the group of families represented by the Griffins, the Morcotts, Willes, and Shaksperes.

The Spencers claim descent from Hugh le Dispencer, Justiciary of England, in the time of Henry III., but it is needless to point out that this is merely a poetical fancy of some ingenious Herald. Spencer or Dispencer is a very common name all over the country, being simply another form of the name of Steward or Senescal, and it is eminently absurd to use this name for the purposes of identity if there be no other evidence.

The first of whom anything positive is known was Sir John Spencer, of Wormleighton, who purchased that estate

from the Copes, in 1503; he married Isabel, daughter and co-heir of Walter Grant, of Snytterfield, whose sister married Richard Willes, of Prior Marston, near Wormleighton. Sir John Spencer died 1522, and his son—Sir William—died soon after, in 1532, having married the daughter of Sir Richard Knightly, of Fawsley, County Northampton, and his son—Sir John—succeeded him. It was probably through his connection with the Knightly family that he became associated with Sir Edward Griffin, A.G., in the purchase of Warwickshire property; amongst other estates, bought by them together, was the Manor of Fenny Compton, in which, as previously mentioned, when part of the possessions of Wroxall Abbey, Thomas Griffin, brother of Alys Shakspeare, had been settled for some time.

It was Thomas Howard (Earl of Arundel) who, in a debate upon the Royal prerogative, in 1621, twitted Baron Spencer with his humble origin. "My lord," said Howard, "when these things were doing your ancestors were keeping sheep." "Yes," said Spencer, "and yours were plotting treason." A combat of wit, which, in those days of freedom, ended with the Earl of Arundel being committed to the Tower, as the first aggressor; upon which he was only released after making a proper apology.

This sheep breeding was curiously a consequence of the great Reformation, the nobles and greedy gentry who obtained the lands of the Church did not take kindly to the burdens upon it, and they declined to support the old Abbey tenants and labourers who had been maintained upon them, and in order to make the most for themselves they turned their small holdings into sheep walks. The period of the prosperity of the religious foundations was that happy epoch, so often sighed for, when every rood of land maintained its man; but, as before noticed, Henry VIII. did his best to promote the comfort of the new landlords—who preferred the roods to the men—by hanging as many of these "sturdy beggars," as the poor

labourers were called, by the roadside, as his myrmidons could capture.

Sir John Spencer seems to have been good to his wife's kindred, for he settled a branch of the Willes family at Fenny Compton, and several of the Griffins obtained holdings under him.

There are traces amongst the early Lichfield wills of a Parnel Griffin and a John Griffin, of Hardwick Priors, who both died in 1546, but whose wills are unfortunately lost ; and there is a will remaining, dated 1557, of William Griffin, of Wormleighton, who describes himself as shepherd to Sir John Spencer, who left a wife (Anys) and children.

It was probably through the descent of his mother, Susán, daughter of Sir Richard Knightly, that Sir John Spencer became more closely connected with the Shaksperes, her mother being a daughter of Sir Edward Ferrars, of Baddesley Clinton, and the Knightlys being also allied by marriage to the Throckmortons, of Coughton and Haseley. And it is quite possible that the marriage between Richard Shakspeare and Alys Griffin resulted from this connection, although the settlement of Edward Griffin at Berswell preceded the settlement of the Spencers at Wormleighton by several years. There is another family who were seated at Baddesley Clinton, whose connection is also of interest to this inquiry, the Metley or Medleys. Nicholas Metley, whose will is still in the possession of the Ferrars family at Baddesley, was buried in the Temple Church, London, 16 Henry VI., holding Baddesley Clinton and Wolston ; and his daughter and co-heir (Margaret, wife of Thomas Hugford) sold lands to her cousin, William Medley, son of Benedict Medley, of Warwick, who (1 Richard III.) bought Whitnash. He bore sable two barres gemelle argent upon a chief of the second, three mullets of the first. Benedict Medley was a clerk of the signet, and he died 13th October, Henry VII., and the Inq. P.M. shows that he held much land

under the priory of Wroxall at Bewsall and Haseley. He also held land in Warwick, Bishampton, Cornbrook, Kington, Myton and Cotton, Tachbrook Malory, Bushwood, Preston Bagot, Lapworth, Berkswell, Shrawley, and Hatton, all places of interest to this inquiry.

There are sepulchral brasses to Benedict Medley and his wife at Whitnash, absurdly plastered on one side wall of the chancel ; but the legend is missing. Rubbings are preserved in the British Museum. Add 32,489 H.H. 3 and 32490 Y.Y. 15.

Unfortunately, the early Registers of Whitnash are lost. William Medley, son of Benedict, was twenty-three years old at the time of the Inquisition P.M. In his will, preserved in the Probate Office, London (dated 2nd September, 1508), he is described as "oon of the clerks," he mentions his uncle, Gerard Dennett. He married Margaret, daughter of Sir Robert Wotton, who subsequently married Thomas second Marquis of Dorset, grandson of Elizabeth Widville, Queen of Edward IV.

His son, George Medley, appears to have left Warwickshire for a richer property (that of Titley Abbey), and to have sold much of his property in Warwickshire to William Morcott, who had purchased Leamington Priory, and whose daughter married Richard Willes, of Newbold Comyn, related to Richard Willes, who with Sir John Spencer married a co-heir of Grant, of Snitterfield.

George Medley died 1557, and his will was proved 10th May, 1 Elizabeth. He mentions his uncle, Dr. Wotton, Dean of Canterbury, and he was still holding lands at Rowington, formerly the possession of Wroxall Priory. A further interest in the family is that John Gryffyn, of Long Ichington (see pedigree, page 267), married a daughter of Humphrey Midlope, of Kidderminster, whose will (Worcester Registry) is dated 9th August, 1561, and who leaves a legacy to his grandson and godson, Humphrey Griffin, of that place. There can be but little doubt that the ancient name of the Medleys was

Medleyhope, or Midhope, in Shropshire, an ancient and knightly family, who disappear from that county about the time that we find them settling in Warwickshire. They appear to have been tenants, in Salop, of the Griffins, or, as they were called, the Griffiths, of Wichnore, so that theirs was an old family connection.

Robert Medley, of Whitnash, by his will dated 1547, mentions his brother, Humphrey, who was probably the Kidderminster man. Humphrey Griffin, son of John Griffin, of Kidderminster and Long Ichington, married, 30th January, 1579, Margery, daughter of William Oldenal, of Waunton, who died 1603, who was a member of another Rowington family, and one of great interest, irrespective of their connection with the Shaksperes, although it is useful in its illustration. The first we learn of this family is from the will of Thomas Forester Parcur, of Duclent, the property of Sir Edward Neville, Lord Baverghenny, whose daughter married Clement Throckmorton, of Haseley, under whom he was also steward of a small Manor in Kidderminster. There is a beautiful brass to him in Chaddesley Corbet Church, from which it would seem that besides his wife, Margery, he left five sons and seven daughters; there are two coats of arms on the brass, one to the left, two arrows crossed, and the other a hunting horn, evidently the insignia of his office. He makes no mention of his family except that he left to his daughter, Jane, the land which he held of the Abbot of Bordesley, with remainder to his daughter, Elleanor. He left many legacies to churches, to Chaddesley, to the high altar of Stone, to our Lady of Kidderminster, near the Trinity, to our Lady of Hartlebury, and to our Lady's service at Stone, twenty sheep of those that were in the keeping of Thomas Parkes, and all his beys (oxen) which shall be with John Oldnal, his houses at Lye and Stone to the the warden of our Lady's Chapel of Stone for founding a priests' house; 3s. 4d. to buy a crysmatory for Hagley Church. John Goldsmith (probably John Littleton, of Frankley) and Thomas A. War-pur, overseers.

This mention of Lye and Hagley is interesting, since it probably accounts for members of the Shakspeare and Griffin families having settled at Hagley and Old Swinford, where also the Parkes family settled. Several of the Oldnals married at Hagley and Churchill. William Oldnal and Alice Smith, probably the parents of Humphrey Griffin's wife, married at Hagley in 1562, and John Oldnal and Margery Parkes married there in 1587.

Probably the Parkes family are of the male issue of Thomas Forester, the names being synonymous, and in all probability John Oldnal was another son, Oldnal possibly being Thomas Forester's family name.

There is a will at Worcester of Agnes Oldnal, of Stone (probably the widow of this John, of Stone, of 1511), dated 1541, who mentions John, Thomas, Richard, Nicholas, and Ann Oldnal (without mentioning their relationship), as well as Richard Oldnal, her son; Margaret Oldnal, her daughter; and Richard Tomys, her son-in-law.

We get the best information respecting these brethren from the will of Thomas Oldnal, of St. Pulcras, London, and Haversham, Bucks, dated 9th April, 37 Henry VIII. He was a very rich merchant, who disposes of much gold and silver plate, diamonds, sapphire, and emeralds. He refers to two brothers, John and Roger, and his nephew, William (son of his eldest brother, not named) and he leaves a legacy to the Church of Rowenton.

John Oldnal, of Rowington, who was bailiff or steward of the Manor, died 11th August, 1558, aged seventy-six. By his will, which gives much information, he left lands in Warwick, Haseley, Bewsall, Preston Bagot, Rowington, Wallford, and Wigston. John Oldnal mentions his sons, John and William, and his daughters, Alice ux John Jennett, Dorothy, Elizabeth ux William Hancoxe, Catherine ux Thomas Hunt, Jane ux John Jeffrey, Margaret ux John Wandel, and Emma ux Nicholas Colle.

Roger Oldnal, his brother, of the same place, by his will, dated 1556, amongst other property devised certain copyhold lands in Rowington, called The Hills, to Marye, his wife (which were formerly the lands of Jone Shakspeare, deceased). This Jone Shakspeare was probably the widow of John Shakspeare, and an ancestor of either John Oldnall or his wife. He left issue, John and Thomas and a daughter, Dennis Smith.

As before observed, the Medleys seem to have sold their Tachbrook property to the Morcotts, and under one or other of them Robert Shakspeare, a weaver, settled there, and in 1559 he married Ann Sheward, of Haseley. There is but little doubt that this Robert was of the family of Richard Shakspeare, weaver, of Haseley, in the time of King Henry VIII., whose will has been already given. There is the will of a Jone Griffin proved at Stratford-on-Avon, 1598-9, in which she refers to her daughter Bennett, wife of Richard Sheward, of Inkborough. It appears, also, that she had another daughter, Agnes, wife of Thomas Bucke. This family were tenants of the Manor of Rowington.

Robert Shakspeare had a family—(1) Roger, who married successively Isabella Parkins and Alice Higgins (of a Hagley family), and by the last wife he had issue, John, who seems to have had further issue, Roger who was also a weaver died 1605; his will is at Lichfield; (2) John; (3) (probably) Thomas and three daughters—Isabella ux. Thos. Turner, Alice ux. Thomas Hawkes, and Joan ux. Lawrence Savage.

We also find at Tachbrook, the marriage of Thomas (son of Roger) Oldnal, before mentioned, of Rowington, and Prudence, daughter of Richard Warner, of Ratcliff, 14th March, 1580. This lady was repeatedly fined as a recusant in 2 Elizabeth's reign, and the same year (1580), Anna, daughter of Edward and Ann Coombe, was baptised there.

This last entry arose from the fact that John Coombe, of Warwick, son of John Coombe, (by Rosa Clopton), of Stratford-

on-Avon, married Johanna, daughter of William Morcott, of Cubbington, son of Henry Morcott, of Tachbrook, and William and John Coombe, their children, were baptised at Cubbington in 1608 and 1609.

Edward Coombe appears to have resided at Wasperton, he was the eldest son of John Coombe just mentioned, by Jocosa, daughter of Sir Edward Blunt, of Kidderminster, therefore half brother of the 2nd John. He married Anna, daughter of Stephen Hales, of Newland, brother of Bartholomew Hales, of Snitterfield, (the Shakespere's friend), and brother also of Christopher Hales, who married a daughter of Sir Thos. Lucy, of Charlcot. Edward Coombe had two daughters—Anna, baptised 1580 at Tachbrook, she married Robert Decon, of Wasperton ; and Jocosa, her sister, married Francis Cornwall, of Burferd, whose sister married Gilbert Littleton, of Hagley.

In the year 1550 there is the baptism at Tachbrook, of William, son of John Campion ; it is not a common name, and possibly it may have no connection with Edward Campion, the Jesuit, who was born in 1540, within the sound of Bow Bells, London ; but very possibly he was a relative, and very certainly both the Poet and the Jesuit must have met at Kenilworth very frequently, which is not far from Tachbrook, as well as the home of the Shaksperes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JOHN JORDON, THE STRATFORD POET.

ALTHOUGH traditionary evidence is not to be accepted too hastily, it cannot, with safety, be summarily rejected, and the candid enquirer will anxiously turn to the works of Jordon, the Stratford Poet, as he has been called by way of joke, who has embodied in his works, probably, a fair summary of all the traditions which were extant in his day, and which, after making allowance for error, cannot but be of value in this. His work is brought down to the year 1790, so that the testimony which he gives, coming after so long a period from the Poet's death, must be received with caution. Even with the best intentioned witnesses, errors will creep in after so long a date.

It was, with great disappointment, that the author found, on referring to Jordon's M.SS, some of which are now in the Free Library at Birmingham, that they have been tampered with, and probably altered in parts ; by whom, or when, could not be explained by the librarian, who thought that probably the mutilations had not been noticed before.

The traditionary evidence can, however, be fairly made out from the context ; the forger has blundered in one place, and has left sufficient evidence behind him, to show the name he was trying to hide. Who was it that desired to set up another theory ? or to smash Jordans ?

It was upon the important question of the name of the first ancestor of the Poet, known to his contemporaries, that of his great grandfather, of which the Heralds would appear to have been ignorant.

This name is clearly given by Jordan as John, no place is given, and he is not certain whether there were three or four degrees between this John and the Poet ; and, it is tolerably clear that this correction or obliteration of the name was not made by Jordan, because in a later MS. he again gives the name of John as that of the first known of the Poets ancestors, and this MS. has been printed by Halliwell-Phillips intact. Jordan also points out very clearly that the Shaksperes came from the Arden district, a hint which, had Halliwell-Phillips fairly followed out, would have led him direct to Wroxall. The author discovered the truth by following out the Griffin clue, through Chipping Warden ; but Jordan's route was just as obvious, and would have led to the same spot.

The substance of Jordans traditions agrees, mainly, with the evidence of the Wroxall Rolls, and leads probably to the conclusion that John Shakspere, to whom the Lady Isabella Shakspere granted land, in 21 Henry VII., was father of Richard Shakspere, the bailiff, and son, probably, of Richard Shakspere, of Wroxall, of the time of Edward IV. It is, however, unsafe without further evidence and research to rely too much upon this conclusion, although it is unquestionably the most obvious and probable.

Jordon was ignorant of the Snitterfield bond of 1561, which proves that John Shakspere, the Poet's father, was son of Richard the bailiff ; for he writes that the Poet's grandfather

was named William, or possibly he meant his great grandfather. Jordan had not the advantage of studying the evidence of the Subsidy Rolls, nor of the wills at Lichfield and Worcester, and he certainly never saw the Wroxall Court Rolls, and, of course, he was ignorant that there was a William Shakspeare at Snitterfield, who was probably brother, but who might have been father to the Poet's grandfather; or this last fact might have accounted for his theory, but it is quite evident that he gave the tradition as he received it, simply as a tradition without facts to support it, and therefore it is one that cannot be lightly disregarded.

It would appear that the Birmingham transcript of Jordan's MSS (which is probably the original) was not that from which Halliwell-Phillips printed his edition in 1865, he seems to have transcribed it from Malone's copy, which had passed into Boswell's hands; but curiously it agrees with it in these mutilations, so that probably the same person got at both of them. One would have thought that a conscientious editor would have restored the original word (which plainly appears in one place, and is an imperfect erasure), or at least that he would have explained why the omission was made, and in some way have accounted for the erasure. Halliwell-Phillips was trying by every means to get at the fact, and could not have regarded it as unimportant. The question arises whether Jordan's tradition was of any value, or was its value destroyed by his want of character? Both Malone and Halliwell-Phillips seem to have had a bitter spite against the poor man. Halliwell-Phillips treated him most unmercifully, charging him with being a forger on the authority of some person unknown, to whom, he alleges, Jordan confessed his forgeries. It is a pity that if such a shameful charge should have been made, that it was not made a little more definite in terms, and supported by some kind of evidence. And it would seem as if Halliwell-Phillips himself did not doubt his honour, for he writes that "Jordan's works are not to be despised, there being many circumstances in them not to be found elsewhere." "Jordan

often gives useful hints for researches, and there is very little amongst his papers that does not deserve a careful perusal," and besides he took the trouble to edit his papers. What! do and write this of a man whom in the same breath he denounces as a forger! It is simply monstrous.

It is a pity that Halliwell-Phillips should have endeavoured to destroy Jordan's credit by bringing charges against his character in which he did not believe; and it is very reprehensible to publish after he is dead a number of his private letters to Malone, which, if they were worth publication, should first have been weeded of all personal matters. But it would appear that Halliwell-Phillips only published them because they exposed, as they certainly did, the ignorance of Malone, who with great pretensions was a mere quack. It is amusing to read in Hunter's MSS. with what contempt he regarded both these men—stupid, ignorant, dishonest, disingenuous were some of his notes on reading their works, so that their strictures upon poor Jordan are much diluted and discounted, and one may charitably hope that they were strangely mistaken in their estimate of his honesty. Curiously, notwithstanding their contempt and abuse, both Malone and Halliwell-Phillips borrowed largely from him, and Malone employed him to make searches for him. Charles Knight (third edition, p. 498) has commented perhaps, too severely, upon Malone's dishonesty in concocting forged records. He cites a letter, 15th April, 1780. "Mr. Malone would be glad to have Shakspeare's house on the same scale as that of Sir Hugh Clopton's. He thinks the arms of Shakspeare a very proper ornament over the door, and very likely to have been there; and neat wooden palings may be placed with propriety before the house."

This, in all probability, is the ground of the charges against poor Jordan. Certainly it tells equally against Malone; but this little matter was, after all, not very serious or deserving the character assigned to it. Every artist, probably, is guilty of some exaggeration, in the details of his subject, and especially does he "improve" the foreground of his paintings.

Jordan gives unmistakeable evidence in favour of John Shakspeare having been a Roman Catholic, but he does not hint that he has any evidence as to the religion of the Poet, though he suggests that he must have been a Protestant, because otherwise that excellent person Queen Elizabeth would not have been so fond of him, and so kind as to patronise him, a bad reason for the wicked woman would have tolerated and entertained the devil himself had he appeared in an amusing character. Elizabeth, if she had any religion, was a Catholic, but she dare not avow her belief, since she would thereby proclaim her own illegitimacy—for poor Queen Catherine long survived Miss Bullen's pretended marriage.

Jordan writes sad nonsense about his hero—unquestionably he worshipped the Poet—he speaks of him as “the libertine sportive young Shakspeare,” “the leader of a loose rabble in a country town, oppressed probably with debt, and encumbered prematurely with a family.” All this is pure invention, not to say unmitigated nonsense; how could the boy get seriously into debt when he was under age, and most certainly he could not be encumbered by it, for he would not be made responsible for it, and if we credit the glorious traditions of the crab-apple tree, so far from showing a habit, it rather established the reverse, for it shows that the youth had miscalculated his powers. And where is the evidence of the rabble? and the leadership? Aubrey, who made minute inquiries, only discovered his partiality for the bright little lad, several years his junior, who was, probably, his pupil at the Grammar School, the son of Griffin ap Roberts, the butcher—probably his own cousin. Surely this child was not a rabble, and where is the evidence or tradition of any other libertine proceedings except with the woman he married. As for his “sportive proceedings,” which is probably intended to refer to his love of sport, that may be admitted, and it was natural and proper that the descendants of archers should love the bow and the green wood, and follow their sport on every possible occasion.

Jordan had preserved another tradition which, curiously, strengthens the theory that he was descended from John of Wroxall, for he records that the Poet had a great uncle named Anthony ; and it is quite possible that the Anthony Shakspeare he refers to as the Poets great uncle, was the son of John of Rowenton. Malone calls Anthony Shakspeare, of Hampton (who had a daughter baptised at Stratford-on-Avon, in 1583), the Poets great uncle.

Jordan who had no knowledge of the Subsidy Rolls, which clear up the fact, thought that this Hampton was in Arden ; but it was, of course, Hampton Curlew, in Budbrook, when we find Richard Shakspeare living, in 1525 ; and subsequently Anthony, probably his elder son, Wroxall Priory, having land in that parish.

Jordan has, usefully, given evidence which disposes of the idea that John Shakspeare was a wool stapler, he shows that this rests solely upon the fact that the wool staplers (or the Clopton) arms are to be found in a window of the birthplace ; and most probably they had been placed there by the Poet himself, when he made his alterations in the new place—the old home of the Cloptons, whose arms he would find there.

Yes, Halliwell-Phillips is right for once, Jordans evidence is not to be despised.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SONNETS.

HUNTER writes : " The sonnets relate to real events, so the *Fidesse* of Bartholomew Griffn, 1596, is a series of sonnets, which appear to relate to a real passion and the accidents of it ; so also the *Diana* of H. Constable—I think also of Spenser." Yes, the works of these authors were well known to be written by them, but we do not know which of the sonnets are Shakspeare's, and assuredly all of them are not his. Some of these lyrics are so exquisitely beautiful in themselves, so clearly the work of a great master, that it seems to matter little whether he wrote all of them or who wrote the others. That some are not written by the same hand may be easily shown by their coarseness and impurity, and utter incongruity—witness the sonnets numbered 127 to 154, which are obviously addressed to an abandoned woman. The edition of 1609 stops at the close of 126, without even finishing it. Some portions of it are addressed to a lovely boy, presumably he to whom most of the verses up to this point are addressed. 127 is addressed to a woman who apparently was a great performer upon the organ of the period. It cannot be

denied that the language of some of these later sonnets is very beautiful, but they are more like Bartholomews Griffin's work than Shakspeare's, and exactly in accordance with his tastes. Compare them with some of Griffin's lovely verses, published as Shakspeare's in the *Passionate Pilgrim*. Some of them are even more lovely, and just as sensual as these. Whoever wrote them did not write the 126 earlier sonnets—not that all these can be positively assigned to the same writer. They, again, are very unequal in power ; sonnets 40 and 41 seem interposed. They are written in much the same spirit as the later sonnets, and seem a part of them ; indeed, it would almost seem as if some writer had followed the author, and here and there interposed a verse of his own, spite of the difference of sense and meaning. Possibly more than one writer has helped to produce the work as it was given to the world. Perhaps there was a malicious design, in order to create a sensation to cause it to be believed that the purest writer of the age could, if he chose, be the most sensual. Surely this fact is apparent, and may easily be shown by the utter incongruity of some of these sonnets. Certainly it is very curious to find them intermixed, but how they got together is not so difficult to imagine. Once remember the fact that they were not published by Shakspeare himself, or even acknowledged by him to be his work, and the wonder ceases. As we learn from Meres, some twenty years previously, Shakspeare's sonnets were kept in manuscript, and handed about amongst his friends. Someone more unscrupulous evidently took a copy, and his copy was, of course, badly taken, or he copied from an impure source from some collection of lyrics of several authors. Versification had been the common accomplishment of gentlemen, and though in King James' time, when these sonnets were first published, all learning and refinement was fast disappearing in spite of that modern Solomon himself, yet in Catholic circles, and there were still thousands of Catholics amongst those who affected to conform to the new religion, some traces of the old state of things would remain. ; and although the common ruck of men—including Catholics, for they were cleverly deprived of their teachers—were fast hastening to that frightful

state of lust and irreligion which culminated in the great rebellion, and later to that worse evil, if possible—the rise of the Puritans. Yet many still (where they could) were educated in the old way, and there would be many poets capable of writing even beautiful poetry. Queen Elizabeth's reign has been called the "Golden Age of English Literature," but in fact it was a time of decay, although perhaps the light, from the blackness of night which followed, seemed to shine more brightly just as it was expiring.

It would not be difficult, therefore, to mix with Shaksperes sonnets those written by his friends, and very possibly the three Earls—Derby, Southampton, and Pembroke—with Bartholomew Griffin, and probably Henry Ferrars, may have each essayed in this direction; and the thief who stole these and thought to secure only Shakspeare's sonnets probably took away in the scrap-book from which he copied them a general collection of several authors and, perhaps ignorantly, or possibly, designedly, palmed it all off as the work of the great Poet. Such a creature would probably be paid by the quantity, and would not certainly be very particular as to its quality, nor would the pirate publisher probably be able to detect it. If this be so, it becomes idle, and it is beneath the dignity of literature, to endeavour to trace out the persons to whom these sonnets are addressed, for we can learn nothing by the discovery. Yet we see learned writers, men whose intellects should be more profitably employed, vying with each other in endeavouring to fasten the peccadilloes of a past age upon particular sinners. Surely if a poor girl, be she maid of honour or not, fell away from the paths of virtue, it can do us no good after 300 years' oblivion to bring her faults and name to light—to hold her up to reprobation, and possibly to expose her descendants now living to shame, for who would care to have the characters of members of his family—disparaged, although they had lived in a past age, when such impurity was the rule rather than the exception. What do we gain, even if we are able to fasten a particular fault upon a particular person, assume

that sonnet any number is addressed to a particular lady—dark or fair—what then ? That does not show that Shakspeare wrote it, or that he ever saw it or the person to whom it was addressed. Mr. Thomas Tyler, M.A., only the other day, indecently brought to light, alas ! very cogent evidence of the sins of a poor girl, and, having paraded her name and family and grievous faults, asked, is it likely that she would have formed a liason with a person in the low social rank of an actor ? as if his status in society altered her disgrace or rendered her sin the less possible ; nor does the fact that the sonnet referred to this poor girl prove that Shakspeare wrote it. Unfortunately for Mr. Tyler's argument the facts here brought to light show that he was wrong in his estimate of Shakspeare's social condition, so that his argument against the improbability of the offence is destroyed, and such a connection, according to him, is apparently made probable. But Mr. Tyler should know enough of human nature to be conscious that, if a woman stoops from the paths of virtue, she is not very particular in the selection of the partner of her shame, and that as likely as not her fault, like that of poor Ann Boleyn, has been committed with a groom or some person her inferior. But by applying a little common sense to the question we shall see that nothing can be gained by an exposure—even if it can be proved—that some of these sonnets have an improper meaning, for it only proves the fact that they are not Shaksperes ; what matters it then who wrote them ?

A great deal has been written about W. H., to whom they are dedicated, and innumerable are the guesses made upon this important subject, as if it mattered, since it is obvious that the sonnets are not addressed to the same person ; but as a fact this dedication is the work of the pirate printer, T. T., and not of Shakspeare ; and besides it is sheer nonsense, ungrammatical and bad English, and it is most certainly not Shakspeare's writing. W. H., "the person to whom the sonnets are supposed to be addressed," is their only begetter. This would appear to be hermetic writing, since, according to the ordinary meaning of

words, the begetter of verses would be the poet who composed them, and not the person who was the object of them, so that T. T. had made Shakspeare dedicate W. H.'s immortal poems to himself. This is clearly a case for Mr. Hitchcock to solve for us.

Curiously this suggestion as to the personality of W. H. fits with the conclusion arrived at by a German critic, who (with that profundity and accuracy in criticism, which distinguishes the great German people), declares that W. H. simply means "William Hissself." This solution at once disposes of the hermetic difficulty, which had well-nigh overwhelmed us.

Shakspeare himself has said "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin." This, indeed, is the one touch, and hereafter it will be wrong to scoff at the alleged relationship of the British and the great Teutonic people, although, as a fact, it is nonsense, for not a word can be found of true English speech in any village or hamlet of the continent, nor any word in any way akin to any word of the British or English language; but no matter, this great discovery proves our near relationship.

After this we can only smile, though otherwise we had hailed with satisfaction the discovery by a mere Englishman that W. H. in some way stood for Elizabeth Regina. Queen Elizabeth must have been about sixty years old at the time they were written, and it would have been flattering, indeed, and no doubt highly pleasing to her, if her beloved Shakspeare had addressed her as "my chubby boy." In the language of Paul Bedford, another player (in his day thought very witty), one can only add, "I believe you, my boy."

The several champions of the causes of the three Earls may be severally congratulated and assured that each one is right—only in this way, that beyond all doubt many of the sonnets were addressed to each of them in turn. To the Earl of Southampton, Shakspeare, it is said, had dedicated his poems *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* (if, indeed, they had not been

dedicated for him by some other pirate), and the Earl still continued his friendship and companionship with the Poet. The late Mr. Greenstreet, who wrote a very clever and interesting paper in proof that the Earl of Derby was the author (the actual begetter) of Shakspeare's plays, was like Mr. Tyler in one respect, he thought it very unlikely that the Earl of Southampton would be on familiar terms with "a low-born player;" but curiously, this argument, like Mr. Tyler's, falls to the ground when it is shown that in point of family Shakspeare was the equal of the best of them, and was, in fact, a cousin of Elizabeth Vernon, whom the Earl of Southampton married, to whom very probably some of these sonnets were addressed—for just as there were several gentlemen addressed, in all probability there were several ladies, besides the poor girl so pitilessly exposed by Mr. Tyler whom he so cleverly identifies as the dark lady, though he fails to prove that she was addressed by Shakspeare.

This subdivision of authors into begetters and persons male and female is the only mode by which a rational meaning can be given to the poems, and fortunately, it disarms those who would rake up unpleasant scandals. Once admit this and the beautiful poems can be read with pleasure, whilst the interlopers can be passed over. It is a pity that they are not separated in print—Shakspeare's beautiful sonnets collected together, and Mr. Tyler's favourites forming a separate volume. The latter would, no doubt, be greatly valued, and meet with a ready sale in Holliwell Street.

It is perhaps vain to speculate upon the subject of these sonnets, and yet some of them are well worthy of deep study. Nothing in English poetry, or perhaps in that of any language, is so beautiful as some of them. As a single work they read oddly and show much repetition; they may perhaps be read in groups, though Professor Dowden's plan of testing the authorship by counting the terminations seems rather childish. Some few are written continuously, but generally they are separate works and should be framed separately, for they are exquisite pictures, each one a perfect gem in itself. Many of

the sorrows, and much of the life of the Poet may be traced in them ; in one he perhaps referred to the love of his youth, to her whom he loved so hopelessly that, having lost her, his marriage with a peasant-girl was a matter of indifference to him ; in another he, doubtless, weeps over the loss of his boy—one of the twins whom Mr. Donnelly thinks constituted the dirt and unhappiness of his home, We know what a deep fervent soul the man had, and we know, therefore, how deeply he must have felt the loss ; perhaps—as is the lot of some men—his children were his only joy, and in loving them alone he obtained some satisfaction for his yearning soul.

The Donellyites will say stuff and nonsense ! the man had no feeling, he was a mere sot. Yes, that is upon the assumption that all the twaddle about his drinking is true, and the false conclusion, built upon the false premises, that the works of Shakspeare are not those of the man of Stratford. But, having got rid of these premises, having shown their utter untruth, what if some of these sonnets were really his ?—then they become of the greatest interest and value, and enable us to see what manner of man he was. But who will solve for us the problem as to the authorship of any of them ? who will help us to enjoy them.

Wordsworth, a man of pure heart, saw much beauty and good in these sonnets ; not but that he too was perplexed and troubled, yet he acknowledged that in them the Poet had unlocked his heart, and he wrote :—" There is not a part of the writings of this Poet, where is found in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings, felicitously expressed." Did he not see the evil in them also ? Assuredly ; yet he would dwell only on the good, the rest he would ignore or put entirely out of sight, and rejoice only in those which were true and beautiful. How much it is to be regretted that he did not take these precious gems, and separate them from the dirt which encrusted them ; but who is bold enough, or capable enough, to determine absolutely the work of the great master ?

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION, IN WHICH NOTHING IS CONCLUDED.

IT is one of the most pernicious errors of the Donelly school that Shakspeare was condemned, or ignored, by his co-temporaries, and nothing can be more unfair than this mode of argument, for we have but little record of co-temporary opinion. Shakspeare's was not an age of criticism, or of newspapers, nor were there any reviews ; all that we can get is from a stray opinion expressed here and there in the works of the day, in which he is not, certainly, always mentioned, but is most probably referred to. Shakspeare has been most unfairly criticised himself, and unjust deductions drawn from the fact that he never spoke well of a co-temporary, but of whom did he speak or write ill ? The absence of critical or friendly remarks by the Poet is no proof of his envy or jealousy—it is simply in accordance with the order of his day. There is, however, one attack upon Shakspeare by a playwright—poor unfortunate Greene—who was, probably, one of the Shakspeare family himself, who had assumed the name, and, but for Greene's envious remarks of the Poet, his own writings and his own reputation had probably been forgotten. Charles Knight

has very justly remarked that Greene's bitterness is a tribute to Shakspeare's power and popularity, and the same may be said of Ben Jonson. There can be but little doubt that Jonson had spoken, and perhaps had written, many bitter things of his friend and patron, to whom he owed so much. As the French have it, his excuses prove it ; nor can there be any doubt that he was thoroughly ashamed of his littleness, and in those turgid and dull commendatory verses, published with the first folio, he not only gives the best evidence that Shakspeare was the author of his own plays, but the best and clearest evidence possible that he was also a great actor. Although one may scan Ben Jonson's praise warily, there is no reason to suppose that it is intended in the spirit which he refers to in his unpleasant allusion to a virtuous matron. He takes care, of course, to vaunt his own superior learning, and to remind the reader that his deceased friend knew "little Latin and less Greek" ; yet he does draw a comparsion in his favour, with the authors of antiquity—of Greece and Rome—and unquestionably he places him above his co-temporaries. Nay, he admits the decline of the stage since his departure and its only hope of revival through Shakspeare's works ; and how does he apostrophise him, "Soul of the age ! the applause ! delight ! the wonder of the stage !" And again in the well-remembered line, "He was not of an age, but for all time !" Can any words testify more clearly to the measure of his popularity ?

John Milton's lines are too well-known to require reprinting, and Spencer's. Can there be any doubt that Spencer, in 1591, referred to him as "the man whom nature self had made to mock himself, and truth to imitate ?" and again when he wrote "that sweet gentle spirit from whose pen large streams of honey and sweet nectar flow." A curious simile, but to whom did he apply ? or who can answer to his description so aptly as our gentle Will.

In 1598 we have the recorded opinion of Francis Meres, Master of Arts, a competent and great scholar, and a man of

sound judgement, whose opinion was not disputed even by his contemporaries, some of whom are included in it and who were put aside by it, nor was it in any way controverted. He writes that "Shakspeare was most excellent above all contemporaries and predecessors of his own country, not only as a comedian but as a writer of tragedy." And he caps his eulogy by placing him as a Poet upon the highest pedestal, as superior to all the Poets of the whole world. "As Epices Stolo said that the Muses would speak with Plautus tongue if they would speak Latin, so I say the Muses would speak with Shakspeare's fine-filed phrase if they would speak English." And this was written of him when he was alive and in the zenith of his fame.

And how does the pirate publisher who stole his sonnets and published them, in 1609, in his absurd dedication refer to Shakspeare but as "our ever living Poet." Good Barabbas we thank thee for this dedication ; you not only acknowledge your robbery, but you show that the Poet had no hand in it, not even a tacit consent—for assuredly William Shakspeare would not have allowed himself to be so referred to.

And did not the common people love Shakspeare ? Leonard Digges has told us the effect of his works upon the stage even whilst he was alive, and their infinite superiority in the public estimation to those of Jonson and others. He writes :—

"So have I seen where Cæsar would appear,
And on the stage at half-sword parley were
Brutus and Cassius. O, how the audience
Were ravished ! With what wonder they went thence !
When, some new day, they would not brook a line
Of tedious, though well-laboured Catiline.
Sejanus, too, was irksome ; they prised more
Honest Iago, or the jealous Moor.
And though the Fox and subtle Alchymist
Long intermitted could not long be miss'd—
Though these have sham'd all th' ancients, and might raise

Their author's merit with a crown of bays—
Yet these sometimes, even at a friend's desire
Acted, have scarce defrayed the sea-coal fire
And door keepers. When let but Falstaff come,
Hal, Poins, the rest—you scarce shall have a room,
All is so pestered. Let but Beatrice
And Benedict be seen, lo ! in a trice
The cockpit, galleries, boxes, all are full
To hear Malvolio, that cross-gartered gull.
Brief, there is nothing in his wit-fraught book
Whose sounds we would not hear, on whose worth look,
Like old-coined gold, whose lines in every page
Shall pass true current to succeeding age."

These lines were written with reference to the publication of the first folio ; but surely any reasonable person can require no better evidence than that of public opinion, and the opinion of the scholars of the time was absolutely in favour of Shakspeare's authorship. And it must not be forgotten that although no authentic copy of these plays had previously been published, that many spurious copies had been issued, so that they were well known as his. Heminge and Condall write that "the public had been abused with divers stolen and surreptitious copies of his works, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious imposters that exposed them."

The piracy shows the great popularity of the plays. Nor must it be forgotten that a great break in the literary history of England occurred not many years after the publication of the first folio of Shakspeare. The natural effects of the destruction of religion by King Henry VIII., and of the twenty years' resolute government of Lord Burleigh, under Queen Elizabeth, culminated in what is called by our schoolmasters the great rebellion.* Learning had nearly become extinct, the infidelity and rubbish of the so-called philosophers, alternated with the crudities and puerile inventions of well-meant, but ignorant Puritans, and the result was chaos—*rudis indigestaque moles.*

There could be no religion except it came through one of the sects, no virtue or purity, no beauty or philosophy, unless delivered by one of the elect (that is the self-elected, who could do no wrong once having been in grace), and all truth must be declared to the profane by one of the body—singing through the nose. Of course the theatre was abolished, and all independent thought. The “Saints” had their way for a time, and a sad time it must have been for the sinners. Happily it soon came to an end—the saints were too good for this world—and when they were put down, or rather swept away with the rubbish of the period, the world having no true religion to guide it, fell into a poor way, and got on as well as it could without any; and a horrible reign of obscenity and impiety succeeded. The eighteenth century was, perhaps, the most degraded of our national history, nor was it till the French Revolution somewhat cleared the atmosphere, and by scattering broadcast over the land her exiles, who were generally her best patriots and brightest intellects, and her myriad clergy, that the grossness of English life disappeared, and we gradually obtained our present enlightenment and refinement. Few are really aware how much England is indebted for our present happiness to the miseries and horrors of the French Revolution (which were scarcely exceeded by those of our own great Reformation). It is idle to look for any testimony to the value of Shakspeare during the reign of Cromwell, when everything beautiful and true was sacrificed for the elevation of the religious inventions of poor purblind John Bunyan and his fellow tinkers.

The Donelly school do not deny this popularity, nor do they dispute the justice of the early judgment upon the works of Shakspeare. To do them justice they confirm it, but they have the impudence and folly to deny that “the man of Stratford” was entitled to this praise. Here are positive facts, the strongest evidence of the opinions of his contemporaries, and what do they bring against them? Absolutely nothing, but some ridiculous scandal which they dishonestly attempt to

fasten upon his memory, and then argue from it that the man guilty of such misconduct could not have written "the works Shakespeare."

In concluding these observations, which the author is vain enough to hope will be of some help to the admirers of our great bard, and also may create some opposition in the minds of those who have so kindly taken possession of him—the great authorities on Shakspeare—he begs to state that he makes no pretension to criticise the works of Shakspeare; but only to point out and seize upon, and so expose some of the worst errors which have been engrafted upon them; and, although he pleads guilty to the impertinence of altering one passage and of dismembering one play, and disavows another or two, he has done so with fear and trembling, and he would not have done this did he not feel that it was right, and did not the important question of the Poet's religious faith rest upon it; but apart from this issue there is reason for this course. The magnificent eulogy of England, in Richard II., is ruined by the substitution of words for those which obviously have been written by the Poet, and the sense and meaning of the passage is obscured and lost. With the words suggested or those equivalent it is simply perfect, and gives the fullest meaning of the Poet establishing his faith, and at the same time doing the greatest honour to his beloved country. And with regard to the author's impertinence in hacking the play of *Henry VIII.*, he has boldly done so because this play, as Aldis Wright and others have published it, is incongruous and absurd, and it requires this treatment to restore it to sense and reason. The parts lopped off contain nothing worthy of preservation. Indeed, both Aldis Wright and Mr. E. I. Furnival affirm this of the whole of it, for they declare that not a single line in the whole play is Shakspeare's and that none of it is better than mere sentiment; and they do so, no doubt, chiefly from a consideration of the faulty construction of it. But if these faults are removed, if the ridiculous anticlimax and the more stupid prophecy concerning Queen Elizabeth is disposed of, let

them apply their minds to a reconsideration of the remainder ; and although it may not be, perhaps, quite so beautiful and brilliant as some of the earlier plays, yet most undoubtedly it contains some very noble and some even magnificent passages, which perhaps it is not too much to say are superior to the work of any poet, ancient or modern, except of Shakspeare himself, and possibly some of the passages are amongst the finest which even Shakspeare ever wrote.

It is impossible, perhaps, without much further mutilation, to make this grand work into a play. It is not written according to rule as a play ; but it is written as no doubt the other of Shakspeare's historical plays were written, as a dramatic history—a series of striking pictures—with the intention, doubtless, to teach the great lessons of history. And the one lesson to be taught by this play was Shakspeare's view of the motives and conduct of the authors of the great Reformation, the very opposite to the conclusion which has been drawn from it.

The beatification and glorification of Queen Elizabeth utterly destroys the lesson the great teacher intended to enforce. Surely, had Shakspeare wished to honour her, there were topics enough occurring in the history of her reign which might have afforded the motive for a touching and exciting drama. Elizabeth, with all her faults, was a great Queen, and some of her acts redound to her glory ; but had the Poet touched upon some of them, had he made the misfortunes of Mary Queen of Scots, of Amy Robsart, of the Earls of Essex and Leicester, of Sir Walter Raleigh, and of many of the victims of her passions the subject of his pen, would it have been possible for her weak successor to have maintained his throne ? Poor Charles Stuart—an honourable man—lost his throne and his head because he would not stoop to tell a lie and could not trust the self-seeking hypocrites who hungered for his life, thirsting for his blood. Had Shakspeare written the undiluted truth, this catastrophe had occurred much earlier ; but he could not and dare not.

Yet, as his was not the pen of one who would prostitute it for gold, he was silent, and no reward could induce him to sing the glories of the bright occidental star as they are impiously prefixed to King James' edition of the Bible.

Great stress has been laid, by those who claim that Shakspeare was a Protestant, upon the historical glory of King John, which they allege to be written in a Protestant spirit, but this is again a mistake. The teaching of this play is, no doubt, anti-Papal, and it is very clearly anti-Christian, if the views of the King are taken into account ; but it would be a curious sect which could adopt them as its own, for John's creed, if we take his action as its teaching, involved the upholding of the practices of murder and theft, and every crime under heaven. No doubt, King John was a strong Protestant against the Pope, and against everything that was good ; but it is too much to say that the tendency of the play was of that character—it was rather written to uphold the power of the Papacy, which it shows triumphant over all—over John himself, and over Louis, of France ; but it is idle to discuss the meaning of the writer, whoever he was, for he was not William Shakspeare. Wherever did he uphold evil and especially throw ridicule upon the sanctity of marriage, and the leading character, the Bastard, who is the fool of the piece (and such a fool, did ever Shakspeare create one like him), establishes himself prime favourite with the audience by glorifying his shame. The whole play is unlike Shakspeare—it is weak and unnatural. Dr. Johnson, whilst admitting that the play was not written with the utmost power of Shakspeare, thought that the lady's grief was very affecting, rather is it very silly, not to say disgusting—too much talk, and that very foolish. Her apostrophe to death is simply comical, especially when she asks death to grin on her, and she promises to buss the old gentlemen ; it is something like, though very far behind, the weird scene when Juliet takes the potion in the chamber of death—and when did Shakspeare ever copy from himself. What can be more unnatural than the dialogue between Hubert de Burgh and Prince Arthur and the

want of art displayed, after this successful appeal by the youth, in the manner of his death. Though the play may have been acted in Shakspeare's theatre, and possibly he may have added some lines to it, it was not of his composition, and should not be published as his. There is a sing-song about it of which he was never guilty, faulty in construction, foolish in ideas, and bad in morals, it cannot be the work of the Poet, and is probably the very play written by Rowley, which some pirate printed as Shakspeare's, in 1611. Meres, no doubt, calls it Shakspeare's, and seems to think highly of it ; if it were from his pen it must have been a very boyish performance.

It is solely with the view to enforce the lesson intended to be taught by Shakspeare himself, in *King Henry VIII.*, that the author, despising the scorn which will certainly be awarded to him for his temerity, has ventured, in some measure, to play the part of critic and censor, and the more so that this play as it stands has been used to give colour to the notion that Shakspeare was not a Catholic. Even Carlyle, though he has honestly given the truth, has attempted to discount it. He writes (French Revoulution) : " Nay, thus too, if Catholic with and against Feudalism (but not against nature and her bounty) gave us English a Shakspeare and an era of Shakspeare, and so produced a blossom of Catholicism, it was not till after Catholicism itself, so far as law could abolish it, had been abolished here."

As if it mattered one straw what the law affected to do ! The law pretended to make the vile King Henry VIII. supreme head of the Church, its Pope in fact, just as the Czars of Russia are Popes of the Greek Scismatics. But every Christian knows that the gates of hell cannot prevail against Christ's Church ; every Protestant of the Church of England, and the thousand sects into which it has split, is forced to admit this ; for it is written too plainly in the Bible, which they affect to adopt, for it to be possible to gainsay it. And this impious and wretched law making the King the head of the Church still disgraces the English Statute Book, and it must remain so long as the State

remains allied to it. But what do the laity and what do the clergy themselves say? Is there a member of the National Church who dare affirm the truth of their own Acts of Parliament? On the contrary, they deny that the Catholic Church has been abolished; they rashly declare that their own Church is Catholic; and they wink at and ignore the fact of their Reformation and of their own Acts of Parliament, and falsify the oaths which their bishops take on appointment by the Crown. And poor, hard-headed, logical Carlyle is also ignored, and his preaching is utterly denied.

This illogical and contradictory teaching of the Church of England—ininitely more difficult to comprehend than the most transcendent dogmas of the Catholic faith—is yet simplicity itself to the views which the German Lutherans build upon it. Their incomprehensible jargon of words and confusion of ideas has been fully elaborated by their so-called philosophers, and especially by Ulrici, in connection with the works of Shakspeare; and they are all based upon the assumption that Shakspeare was a Protestant, because of these plays of *King Henry VIII.* and *King John*. It is with the amiable view of shattering the foundation of these philosophers that this play, as Shakspeare wrote it, is given in full, and the other is scoffed at.

Some good Protestants aver that the Kings of England are only supreme heads of the Church upon earth, as if it were necessary to enact by Act of Parliament that these holy men were supreme in heaven.

It will, of course, be denied that Shakspeare's work has been tampered with, and some critics will be shocked at the audacity of anyone daring to dismember a play of the importance of *Henry VIII.*, in order (it will be said) to support a preconceived theory; but numberless instances can be shown where this has been done, and sometimes as, in the first eulogium of England in King Richard II., already noticed, to the destruction of the sense of the passage. The alterations

made in this play by Act v. actually nullify and destroy its sole motive, and make nonsense of its moral.

The Protestants of the time of James I. were not able to hear the word *Mass* (which Henry VIII. had endeavoured to stamp out, and which they called a blasphemous fable) pronounced even in an oath ; and when Shakspeare made Iago say, "By the *Mass*, 'tis morning," the Master of the Revels changed it into "In troth, 'tis morning."

Some critics, who certainly were not biased by any consideration of the object lesson Shakspeare intended to exhibit by this play, and probably in indifference to it, have actually lopped off other Acts besides the fifth, and they have given them to other poets. Mr. Spedding, whilst admitting that much of the play is truly Shaksperes, attributes to Fletcher—Scenes 3 and 4 of Act i., 1 and 2 of Act ii., 1 and 3 of Acts iii., and Acts iv. and v.—probably only as to the last act is he correct. Mr. Samuel Hickson is practically in accord with Spedding ; so much so that Aldis Wright, who, apparently, would agree with anyone who would get rid of this terrible reproach to his religion, thinks this concord "a remarkable coincidence." The only remarkable thing to be noted is that Hickson, having read and agreed with Spedding, was unable to explain upon what principle the two authors worked in order to contrive this play, and he even doubted whether Spedding was quite satisfied with the explanation he himself suggested. This, of course, was one of those infallible tests which these great schoolmen adopt, Some ridiculous nonsense about the disproportionate number of lines which ended in a redundant syllable.

It must be conceded that there is a vast difference in the tone and spirit between the parts rejected by Spedding and those admitted by him to be the genuine work of the great Poet. Nothing can be more dignified and noble than the words put into the mouth of Buckingham and Catherine of Aragon ; and there can be nothing meaner or more contemptible than in

the language of some of the speakers in the acts he attributes to Fletcher ; but, still, some of it is very fine and fully worthy of the great Poet. These critics leave out of consideration the motive of the play. Shakspeare intended to degrade Henry VIII., and Anne Boleyn especially, and to show the worthlessness of their characters. There is the bitterest satire in the last words of Ann, in Scene 3 of Act ii., "Pray do not deliver what here you've heard to her." And yet, according to the Lord Chamberlain, "Heavenly blessings follow such creatures." Did not the old lady betray what sort of a creature she was in her last words, "what do you think me?"

These acts, coarse and unpleasant as they are, are yet essential to convey the full meaning of the writer ; he wanted to show how completely these vile creatures understood each other. Henry VIII. evinced his self-consciousness by his sneer at the Cardinal's levity in collecting these girls around him, which was no compliment to his guests and his own partner, as well as a severe condemnation of his own conduct in joining them dressed up as a tom-fool ; and the King's kissing and flattering the girl—a perfect stranger to him, as well as Lord Sand's previous osculations, are portrayed, not because there is anything pleasant or worthy of notice in such things, but in order to exhibit Henry's levity and unseemly conduct, and to give the true motive for his "Reformation." This was the man who dared to tamper with the the Catholic religion, and to constitute himself and his successors to the Crown God's Vice-Regents upon earth ; to make himself in fact, an Anti-Pope, in order to destroy and get rid of its inconvenient dogmas, and more especially that which enforced the sanctity and the inviolability of the marriage bond.

Since this book was written the author has had the pleasure of perusing Dr. Upton's work "Critical Observations of Shakspeare" (1746), which Coleridge could scarcely have had in his memory when he so unsparingly condemned Shakspeare's critics. The writer is not only a great classic, but unlike so

many schoolmen, takes a broad and comprehensive view of things, and he has courage, too, to reject as spurious some of the plays which have been published as Shakspeare's, as—*Titus Andronicus*, *Love's Labour Lost*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and he rejects them on the question of manner and style, from which he asserts a true critic can form as unerring a judgment as a painter can distinguish a copy from an original. It is a curious thing that adopting Dr. Upton's views the three plays he considers to be certainly spurious contain no less than twenty out of the thirty-six pieces of Latin of more than three words which are to be found in the whole of Shakspeare's plays, and *Henry VI.* contains four, so that there are only ten pieces left to be distributed amongst them, showing that Shakspeare himself very rarely quoted foreign languages.

He had a profound admiration for the Poet and a great appreciation of his work, though he did not hesitate to condemn him when he thought he was in fault, and curiously his severest condemnation arose from a consideration of this play of *King Henry VIII.*

Though fully alive to the fact that his text, as we possess it, is full of errors, indeed, he writes, page 186 :—" But are there no errors at all crept into the copies of Shakspeare? Perhaps more than into any one book published since the invention of printing." And also sensible that whole plays have been attributed to the Poet which were not of his composition, he seems to forget to apply his rules to cases where only partial alterations have been made, and he bases a very serious charge upon this very play, which a little reflection would have satisfied him was groundless. At page 134 he writes:—" One could wish that Shakspeare was as free from flattery as Sophocles and Euripides." " To omit some of his rant about Kings, which borders on blasphemy, how abruptly has he introduced in his *Macbeth* a physician giving Malcolm an account of Edward's touching for the King's evil, and this to pay a servile homage to King James, who highly valued

himself for a miraculous power (as he and his credulous subjects really believed) of curing a kind of scrofulous humours, which frequently are known to go away of themselves, in either sex when they arrived at a certain age. In his *King Henry VIII.* a story which should have ended at the marriage of Anne Boleyn is lengthened out on purpose to make a christening of Elizabeth and to introduce, by way of prophecy, a compliment to her Royal person and dignity ; and what is still worse when the play was some time after acted before King James another prophetic patch of flattery was tacked to it."

There cannot be a doubt that this double charge of flattery is baseless in each case. It has already been shown that Shakspeare refused even to write upon the death of Elizabeth, and the idea that he would countenance these Protestant superstitions, of touching for the King's evil, is simply ridiculous. The more serious part of the charges, that "his rant about Kings bordered on blasphemy," may be refuted by production of the instance given by Dr. Upton. It is taken from *Macbeth*. Macduff says :—

" Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope'
The Lord's annointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' th' building."

This is not sacrilegious or blasphemous, but simply the Catholic doctrine—to the full belief in which both Henry VIII. and Elizabeth owed their lives and personal security.

The Nonconformists, disputing it, put King Charles to death ; but that fearful murder would scarcely be justified in these days, even by the most rabid of the numerous sects into which the Dissenters have split up, or if they have such murderous feelings in their breasts, they take good care to hide and disavow them. There can be little doubt that the universal horror inspired by this atrocious act, brought about the Restoration much more quickly than otherwise would have happened. The breath was scarcely out of the body of the vile

murderer, Cromwell, than his whole policy and work was swept aside, and the doctrine of murder, under the pretence of religion, was disposed of for ever.

Dr. Upton gives valuable testimony to the religious fervour of the Poet. At page 212 he writes : "Shakspeare was a great reader of the Scriptures, and from the bold figures and metaphors he found there enriched his own elsewhere unmatched ideas."

No doubt the Puritans often quoted Scripture to defend murder (the devil himself follows this practice), and especially is it common, in these days, amongst the wildest and crudest of the latest crazes in religion (so called); but when did Shakspeare even quote the Bible, or assimilate its phrases in his own work, except to teach and illustrate the sublime truths of Christianity. He never used it to cover the designs of the murderer or the covetous man, to flatter the Pharisee or to gild the blasphemies of the latest discoveries in religion. He used it frequently, but always to enforce the question of virtue, of humility, and of charity; and his frequent allusions to the authority, and the doctrines of the Scriptures, prove, more conclusively than anything else, that his faith and doctrines were Catholic; and unlike so many of our unfortunate countrymen at that period, he was unable to turn about and jump about with King Henry VIII. or with Elizabeth and King James, or to accept their novel creeds. King Charles I. was too good and simple a man to pretend to invent any doctrine of his own, and from his death till the time of Catholic emancipation, although each King affected to be invested with supernatural powers, and down to the time of the exemplary and excellent King George IV., regularly touched for the King's evil; they ruled more by statecraft, than by appeal to what was right, and troubled themselves and their subjects very little about religious affairs.

Now that the Catholic religion—spite of the Statue Book—is once more recognised by the State, which even contributes to

its support in various ways, and especially in providing funds for the education of the poor in that religion, it becomes of importance to state the truth about the great Poet, and also naturally, a subject of pride and gratification, to all Catholics, to be able to claim him as one of their own faith and teaching. Is the State injured by this? On the contrary, his teaching is to uphold the State, and to respect its rulers—in the words of Scripture, “to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, to God the things that be God’s.”

THE END.

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